



WORKERS' WORLD

A MAGAZINE OF
INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR AND
POLITICS



Worker struggle in the Philippines

ALSO:

- US Labour movement
- Political compromises: Zimbabwe
- German workers' strike
- Namibian labour laws

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WORKERS' WORLD is a publication of the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG). We are a research and service organisation based at the University of Cape Town. We provide research, information and education workshops on international labour and political issues to the progressive trade union and community organisations.

We are not a political organisation. But we are guided by the needs, aspirations and struggles of the oppressed and exploited people across the world. As a collective we support the struggle for socialism and international working class unity and solidarity. This is what motivates us to bring to South African workers the lessons and experiences of struggle of their comrades around the world. We try to do this in a way which will help workers and their allies in SA to build their struggle and their organisations.

WORKERS' WORLD is one small part of this work. It is a regular magazine which will bring to you the stories and analyses of struggles in other countries.

Although ILRIG edits each edition collectively, our articles will often reflect different progressive political points of view. We do not think that having different progressive points of view is a problem. We believe that this will help to build open and democratic debate in the progressive movement. As part of this, we encourage comrades who feel they want to write something about international issues to send us letters or articles. WORKERS' WORLD does not belong to ILRIG alone. We hope that our readers will feel that it belongs to them too and that they will help to build it into a strong and democratic progressive journal.

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WORKERS' WORLD

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A message to our readers

The confidence to struggle

Today we can see a new determination among workers and the oppressed masses in our country to struggle. Behind the growing strike wave, the community protests, and the mass action, is the anger of millions at the violence of murder, poverty, homelessness and unemployment. It is this anger and confidence to struggle that has given our organisations a new militant direction.

There are two important lessons that this new confidence to struggle shows us. The first lesson is that the bosses and the apartheid regime are enemies of the exploited and oppressed. They did not stop being enemies when they started negotiations. And they did not just become enemies again with the Boipatong massacre. They are enemies all the time, even when they are smiling and shaking hands with our leaders.

The second lesson is that our only strength against the enemy is the strength of mass organisation and action. It is not a strength that must be turned off when there are negotiations and turned on again when negotiations break down. When we negotiate with bosses or with the government we are putting our demands in front of the enemy. If the masses are not organised and mobilised outside the place where negotiations are happening then our demands have no roots and no strength. We cannot win our demands in negotiations through skilful talking. What we win and what we lose depends on our strength to force the bosses and the government to give in.

These lessons are not new lessons that only come from our own struggle. The need for us to know the enemy and to know where our strength lies comes to us from struggles across the world. This is why WORKERS' WORLD brings stories from struggles in other countries. When we look around the world we can also see that our struggle is against an international enemy and that to fight that enemy we need the strength of international worker solidarity. This is why WORKERS' WORLD brings stories of worker internationalism.

In this issue of WORKERS' WORLD we have an article on the militant workers' movement in the Philippines. We can see that their experience of union organisation and political struggle is very

similar to ours. This common experience gives us a good foundation for building contact and solidarity.

We also have an article on the history of the labour movement in the United States. The aim of this article is to show the true exploitation and oppression that lies beneath the lies of American wealth and democracy. We also show the dangers for workers when the trade union leadership forgets that the bosses are the enemy and goes into a partnership of class collaboration.

Our third big article looks at the negotiated political settlement in Zimbabwe in 1979. That experience has very important lessons for us because of the way that the leadership of the liberation movement was forced to accept serious compromises because of the weakness of mass organisation and struggle. The same issue of workers' rights in a democratic government are looked at in the article on the new Namibian Labour Law. We also bring news of recent strikes in Germany and Zimbabwe.

In our section on international solidarity we publish a letter sent to South African trade unions from the Korean Trade Union Congress calling for solidarity. Our interview with an organiser from T&GWU shows us that we have a common struggle with workers in Britain and encourages international solidarity against bosses' attacks.

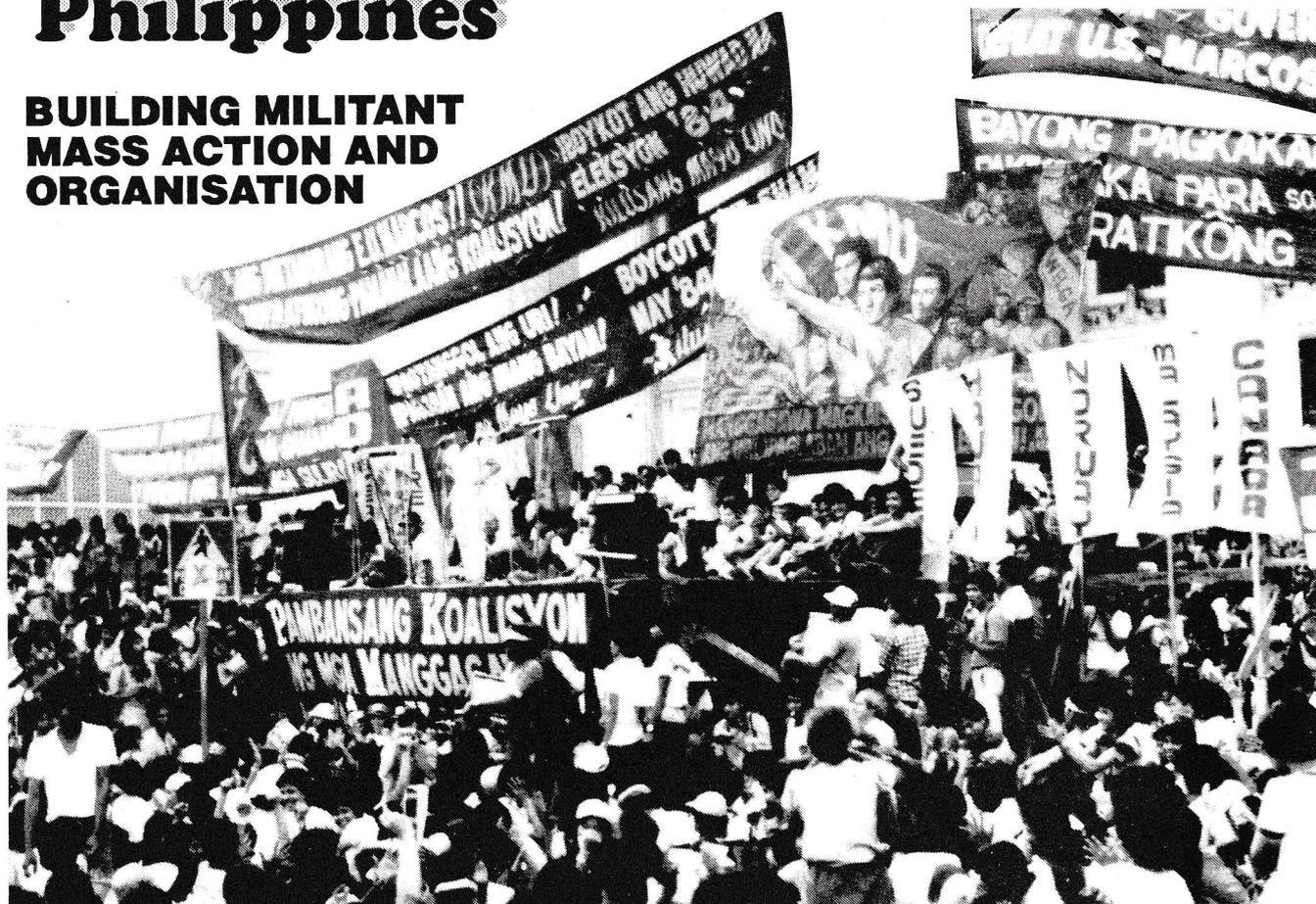
Comrades, we do our best to write articles in WORKERS' WORLD that we think will help to build workers' confidence and that can help workers to make solidarity links with workers in other countries. But we do not just want our words to be in WORKERS' WORLD. We want to encourage all readers to write letters to our *Workers' forum* page. You can write to *Workers' forum* to give your ideas and experiences in the struggle. You can also write to give your opinion on WORKERS' WORLD or to suggest countries that we should write about. ★





Worker struggle in the Philippines

BUILDING MILITANT MASS ACTION AND ORGANISATION



In 1986, the brutal dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos came to an end. Throughout the country, workers and peasants celebrated. But their celebrations soon turned into anger and hatred against the new Aquino government. Aquino's government acted in the interests of the bosses and American imperialism against workers. But Filipino workers have continued to build organisation and united mass action.

At COSATU's fourth National Congress, a message of support was received from Filipino workers organised in the militant trade union federation, the KMU. This message showed the strength and confidence which Filipino workers draw from our struggle. And it showed how they have also built mass organisations and militant action as the most powerful weapons in worker struggle.

Like in South Africa, workers in the Philippines have built strong, democratic organisations in their factories, communities, and on the land. And like in South Africa, there has been a strong fighting alliance between trade unions and other political organisations of the working class. Today Filipino workers, peasants, youth and women are taking

forward a militant struggle against the government and its imperialist allies.

So there are many traditions of struggle which we share with comrades in the Philippines. That is why it is important that we know the story of their struggle. By turning our eyes to workers in another country, we will see that we do not stand alone in our struggle against exploitation and oppression.

We can also learn important lessons for our struggle from the way in which Filipino workers have built their organisations and alliances with other sectors. And when we share information on workers' struggles across the world, it helps us see more clearly how we can actively build international worker solidarity around our shared demands and vision of the future.

The power of the dictatorship and American imperialism

The history of the Philippines is a history of colonialism and exploitation. For over four hundred years, the Philippines was occupied by foreign powers. First there were the Spanish rulers who exploited the labour and resources of the Philippines. Then American imperialism took control of the country. American bosses made big profits and pushed the Filipino people into even deeper poverty.

After the Second World War, the Philippines got its independence. But independence did not mean an end to the power and control of America. The new rulers of the Philippines were mainly rich landowners who depended on America for their wealth and power. They signed agreements which protected the economic and military interests of America. One of these agreements allowed America to keep its military bases in the country for more than forty years! By setting up puppet governments inside the Philippines, America has made sure that capitalist law and order is maintained.

In the mid-1960s, Ferdinand Marcos became the new president of the Philippines. With the support of America and the army behind him, Marcos declared Martial Law and ruled the country like a dictator. For the Filipino people, Martial law meant more exploitation and more repression.

Marcos opened the doors of the Philippines even wider to multinational companies. Working closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Marcos made plans to get more foreign bosses to invest in the Philippines. These plans offered the bosses big benefits. They could use Filipino workers as cheap labour and did not have to pay any taxes. The goods produced by these multinationals were mostly exported to rich Western countries. Marcos also borrowed billions of dollars from the IMF and World Bank. The growing foreign debt has given international capitalist banks more and more power over the government's economic policies.

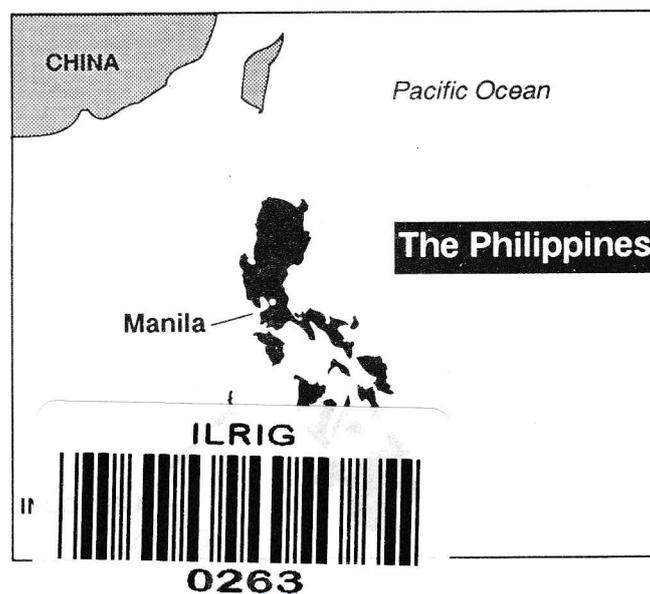
Millions of Filipinos will remember this as a time of great suffering and hardship. While wages were low, prices and inflation went up. Many workers felt the pains of unemployment. Slum areas around the cities grew bigger as more people were pushed into a life of poverty. And to control the working class Marcos used brutal repression. Thousands of people were arrested, imprisoned, assassinated or "went missing". Mass organisations were banned. Strikes and other mass actions were made



President Marcos, Imelda Marcos and their grandson at a military parade in 1985. In the middle is General Ramos, who won the 1992 Presidential election.

illegal. And many people suffered death or injuries due to the violent attacks by the army.

But it was also during these years that a powerful and united workers' movement was born and the armed struggle against the dictatorship began.



The formation of the KMU

When Martial Law was first declared in 1972, worker organisations were banned and worker leaders arrested. This made it difficult for workers to organise and build their strength. For three years, workers stood back from struggle. Then in 1975, workers in the La Tondena factory had a sit down strike. All over the Philippines, other workers gained confidence from this action. Workers again began to turn to organisation and militant action. Thousands of workers marched to protest against the strike-ban. In many parts of the country, workers defied this law anyway and went on "illegal" strikes.

For their struggles to be strong, workers needed to unite and co-ordinate their actions. Because of this need, different worker organisations came together to form a trade union federation, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) in May 1980. Since 1975, they had been forced to listen to the lies of the government-controlled Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP). The TUCP was used to control worker militancy and to win worker support for the Marcos government.

But in the KMU, workers spoke a different language and many workers turned to the KMU as their political home. The KMU spoke the language of worker action against the dictatorship and its imperialist allies. This is how the president of the Sugarworkers' union, an affiliate of the KMU, explains its role:

"We consider the formation of KMU as a continuation of the Philippine tradition of genuine and militant unionism. Genuine unionism for us means unionism which is democratic, pro-

worker, nationalist and militant. It is nationalist because we believe the root cause of our problems lies in the domination of the Philippine economy and politics by foreign government and foreign multinationals. It is militant because that is the way workers fight for their rights".

Under the banner of the KMU, workers held massive demonstrations and rallies. Workers united around their demands for an end to trade union repression, price increases, unemployment, anti-worker laws and government-controlled "yellow unions". Together workers called for higher wages and an end to exploitation by the multinationals and American imperialism. These were the demands that workers carried forward into hundreds of strikes. And these were the demands for which thousands of workers spent years in jail or sacrificed their lives. So even with all the attacks and all the laws against them, workers continued to struggle. On every May Day since 1980 workers have celebrated the birthday of KMU and its continued survival as a weapon of struggle.

Building united action

KMU did not stand apart from other organisations and struggles. In 1973 the National Democratic Front (NDF) was formed. Under its slogan "United to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship", the NDF aimed to bring together different organisations around a common programme of action. From the beginning, there were different political views inside the NDF. Was the struggle against the dictatorship also a struggle for socialism? How should workers build unity and their leadership in struggle?

How should workers win middle class allies? These are questions which still face the NDF today.

KMU gave its active support to the NDF. Students and peasants also carried the banner of the NDF into struggle. In the cities and in the countryside the NDF drew millions of people into militant grassroots action like general strikes. During these strikes, street and community barricades were set up. Students boycotted classes and held big demonstrations.

Even the Marcos dictatorship could not break this fighting spirit.



Anti-Marcos demonstration, 1985



A slum settlement in Manila, the capital of the Philippines.

The turn to armed struggle

At this time, the armed struggle also began.

“For peace-loving and hardworking toilers of the land, taking up the gun is a painful but well-thought-out decision. Making this decision is not merely based on specific acts of injustice but with an understanding that the system is unjust, and it is a right and a duty to overthrow such a system”.

With these words, the Communist Party of the Philippines set up its armed wing in 1969. The New People’s Army (NPA) is mainly a peasant army and most of its units are based in the rural areas. Many peasants gave support to the NPA because of its actions against the big landowners and its demands for the redistribution of land. Thousands of peasants were trained as guerillas and took part in armed action against government officials and government security forces. Although the NPA made many gains in the countryside, they had to face a much bigger and better equipped army of the dictatorship.

Marcos is overthrown

From the beginning of the 1980s, the Marcos regime was faced with a growing political and economic crisis. There was high unemployment and inflation. And the foreign debt had skyrocketed. The mass of Filipino people became even more determined to struggle against the dictatorship. With every new struggle, there was more repression.

Even the American government began to put pressure on Marcos to make some reforms. They were worried that their profits were no longer safe in the Philippines. They were also worried that it

would be difficult to justify their support for Marcos if he continued with his brutality. Under these pressures, Marcos called an election in 1986 to try and strengthen his rule. At this time an official of KMU said:

“Foreign investors didn’t want to invest money in the Philippines because of the political turmoil. Marcos had to show to the world, to the transnational corporations, that he was still the president. But he miscalculated the mood of the people.”

Democratic organisations, including the KMU, called for a boycott of the election. They said that the election was irrelevant and that it would be filled with fraud and corruption. But the call for a boycott was not united. Some comrades felt that organisations should mobilise in support of Corazon Aquino who was standing against Marcos. Her husband had been assassinated in 1983 for his opposition to the dictatorship. So for many people, Aquino symbolised the struggle for democracy and freedom.

When Marcos announced his election victory, thousands of Filipinos followed Aquino’s call to defy the election results. And when two important army officials broke away in protest against Marcos’s corruption, the Filipino masses took action to support them. For four days, the strength of “People’s Power” shook the Philippines. Unarmed workers blocked every entrance to the dictator’s palace by setting up human barricades. Other workers occupied government buildings and guarded the airport to stop Marcos’s allies from fleeing the country. Marcos himself managed to escape in an American plane!

Aquino's reforms

With the support of the church, some big business leaders and the middle-class, Corazon Aquino became the new President of the Philippines. Although she came from a family of rich landowners and was distant from mass organisations, the majority of Filipino people looked to her with confidence. She spoke words and made promises which sounded different to those of Marcos. In this way she raised hopes that her government would bring a better life to the majority of people.

Political prisoners were released. The prices of some basic goods and services were lowered. The courts were reorganised and some repressive laws were scrapped. Aquino also promised to change the anti-labour laws of the Marcos dictatorship.

These reforms satisfied the bosses and Aquino's supporters from the middle-class. But the demands of workers and peasants went far beyond what Aquino was doing. Workers and peasants demanded:

- All structures of the dictatorship must be dismantled.
- A programme of land reform must be implemented "based on the principle that those who till the land should own it and should benefit from the fruits of their labour".
- Multinational companies in the Philippines must be nationalised.
- The exploitative economic policies of the IMF and World Bank must be rejected.

- US military bases must be removed from the Philippines.
- All anti-labour laws must be scrapped. A new labour code must be drawn up which protects the right to organise and strike.
- The army must be stopped from harassing workers and their organisations.

Working class life remains the same

But these demands fell on deaf ears. Workers began to lose confidence in the Aquino government as they watched it follow the path of bosses' reform. Aquino was only prepared to make changes which did not threaten the interests of the Filipino bosses, middle-class or American imperialism.

Aquino's policies and actions have brought very few changes for the working class:

- The governments' land reform programme allowed the landowners and multinationals to keep control of their huge farms.
- Special protection and incentives have been given to multinational companies which continue to make profits by exploiting the labour of Filipino workers.
- Repressive laws are used to try and break up strikes and smash worker organisations. Aquino has used State of Emergency powers to virtually ban strikes and work stoppages.
- When negotiations with the NPA broke down, the government followed a policy of "total war" against "communist influences". The army has



Men at the American military bases in the Philippines have used Filipino women as prostitutes.

carried out an ongoing campaign of terror. The government has also actively supported vigilante groups which carry out attacks against organisations and working class communities.

The government has also brought no solutions to the economic crisis in the Philippines. It has not freed the country from the debt built up by Marcos and continues to implement the policies of the IMF and World Bank. These policies have forced higher taxes on people, reduced government subsidies on basic foodstuffs, and have cut government spending on social services. Aquino's policies have pushed workers into unemployment and deeper poverty.

This statement from KMU explains what these policies have meant for the working class:

"By committing the government to pay our foreign debts to the 'last cent', the Aquino administration has delivered the nation, its people and natural resources to the hands of foreign control. The country's experience has proven that this commitment can only be fulfilled at the people's great sufferings and untold tears".

Worker struggle continues

Since the elections in 1986, the Filipino masses have continued to organise and struggle. All over the Philippines, workers and peasants have taken militant action against the policies of the government.

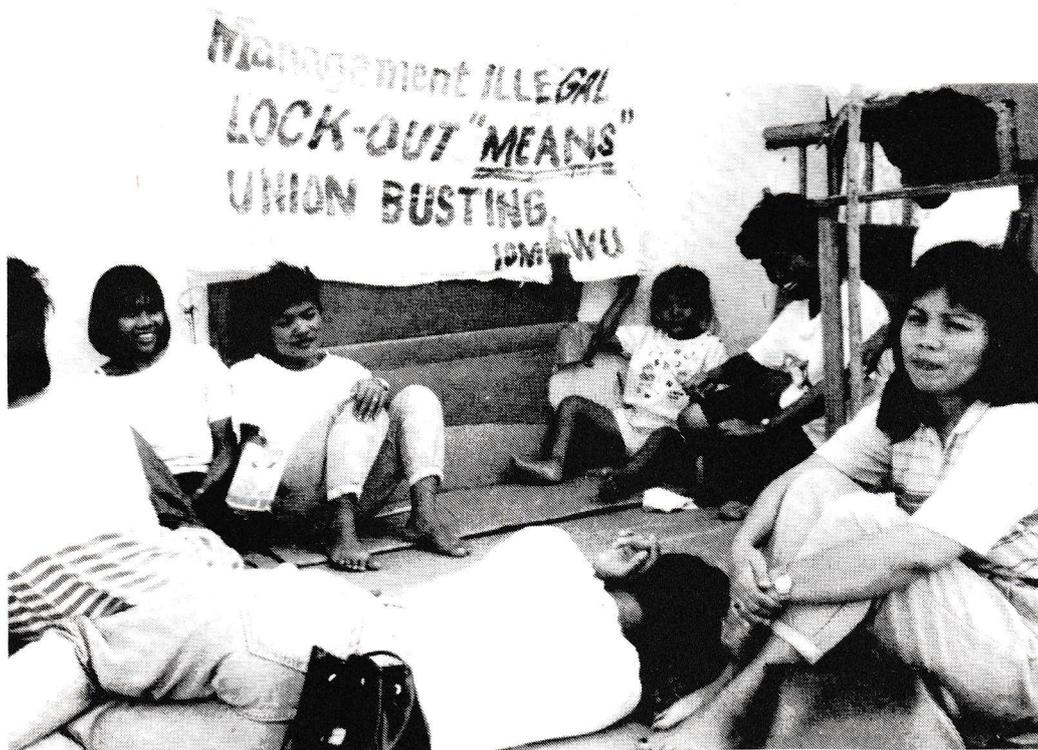
On the fifth anniversary of the Aquino government in February 1991, a mass march called for a

"new government of the people, and not of the foreigners and the elite". Thousands of workers, peasants, women, squatters and students showed that the Aquino government had given them very little to celebrate. This march also showed that the eyes of Filipino workers and their allies were turned again to "the parliament of the streets" as their biggest source of strength and power. They have learned that they cannot rely on a leader in the bosses' parliament to meet their demands.

And under the banner of the KMU, workers have waged hundreds of strikes and other protest actions. Many of these actions have been brutally repressed by the government. Workers' shop-floor demands have mostly been for higher wages, and for an end to union harassment and retrenchments.

In November 1990, a general strike was called by KMU and other union federations. This was the biggest general strike since Aquino came to power. For five days, the whole country was brought to a standstill as thousands of workers united around their demand for an increase in the national minimum wage. Together with teachers and health workers, workers from every industry and every region in the country joined the strike.

In response to this action Aquino's government threatened to ban the KMU and arrest its leaders. The army and police were used to stop the strike spreading. Workers were arrested and hundreds injured when rallies and picket-lines were broken up violently by the government's armed forces.



Multinationals still come to the Philippines for cheap labour. These workers were locked out after a strike for higher wages.

Working-class women face many problems – exploited as workers and as women. But Filipino women have not stayed silent. They have formed organisations and mobilised around their demands. The KMK is a woman workers' movement which works closely with the KMU and tries to make sure that the KMU also takes up issues which affect women workers.

Building campaigns through mass united action

Each new economic attack against the working class has been met with more resistance and more anger. On May Day 1991, the KMU launched a campaign against poverty. One of the main demands of this campaign called on the government to reduce the price of oil.

The oil price had been almost doubled in December 1990. For workers this meant more inflation and higher prices for their food and transport. Thousands of workers were retrenched because of a rise in production costs. Aquino claimed that the price of oil was increased because of the Gulf War. But the KMU and other progressive organisations claimed that Aquino was just following the instructions of the IMF. The KMU declared:

“The intrusion of the IMF into the country’s affairs should end now. The interest of the foreign multinational companies should not come first. The oil is a vital industry that needs to be nationalised by a government that truly serves the people.”

Together with other unions and political organisations, the KMU called for a general strike. In July 1991, hundreds of thousands of workers walked out of their workplaces. Big picketlines could be seen outside almost every factory. Transport in the main cities came to a standstill. And in a number of universities and colleges, students and teachers boycotted classes.

This general strike was followed by more mass action – twenty thousand people marched to the government buildings and there were more factory walk-outs and transport strikes. Through these actions, organisations managed to win a slight decrease in the petrol price.

Recently there has also been a big increase in electricity rates. Again, organisations saw this increase as part of the IMF and World Bank’s economic strategy to protect profits by attacking workers. This strategy was explained by the KMU chairperson:

“The power rate increase is another imposition on the Filipino people, particularly the workers and urban poor. The increase will not only bring higher electric bills to the people already faced with rampant unemployment and low wages, but will also mean higher costs of goods and services

as manufacturers would pass its increased power cost onto consumers”.

To fight the price increase for electricity, workers, women and students again organised a joint campaign. Their organisations came together in the Campaign against Power Rate Increases and mobilised people into action. There were mass marches, mass meetings and demonstrations. In many cities around the country, people switched off their electricity in a symbolic protest.

Building solidarity

There are many things in the story of the Philippines that are the same for us in South Africa. Because like workers there, workers in South Africa also suffer exploitation by huge multinationals. And like Filipino workers, workers in South Africa are forced to face the greed and brutality of international capitalism. So together, workers here and workers there share the same needs and struggles. We also share a history of militant mass action and organisation to fight for our needs. Already we have recognised what we share by building links between COSATU and the KMU.

We also share the same political questions as the Filipino working class. In the Philippines today, a new bosses’ government has just been elected. And in South Africa today, we are struggling to win our demand for a Constituent Assembly which will bring us a democratic government. In front of workers in both countries is the question: How can we win a democratic government which serves the needs and interests of the working class?

By turning to international worker solidarity, workers can help build their strength and confidence to win their dream for the future. We need to take the words in our resolutions on international solidarity and give them life through our own action. We need to build our relations with the KMU at a grassroots level.

In our organisations we need to discuss: How can we reach out to organisations in the Philippines? Around what issues can we build strong worker to worker links? And what active support can we give to the campaigns and struggles of the Filipino working class? ★

In May this year representatives from COSATU visited the Philippines. In the next issue of WORKERS’ WORLD we hope to publish an interview with these comrades.

May Day messages 1992

At the end of April this year ILRIG presented a May Day programme on radio Xhosa. These were the messages that we received from organisations in other countries to read on the programme:

From "Women Working Worldwide"

Women Working World-wide is a voluntary network for information exchange for women working in manufacturing around the world, especially in the garment and microelectronics industries. To the workers of South Africa, on this very important May Day, we would like to send our warm greetings of solidarity and hope for everything that must be achieved before next May Day.

From the Canadian Union of Public Employees:

Be assured of our solidarity with the workers of South Africa. Brothers and sisters, our hearts are with you today and with all the workers of the world – we are one.

On behalf of the 400 000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, we offer our best wishes for May Day 1992.

From the Namibia National Teachers' Union:

We salute the South African workers in their struggle against apartheid and exploitation. Having overcome the apartheid colonialism in Namibia only two years ago, we still face unemployment and poverty on a large scale. The struggle for a living wage and worker control has only begun and we have to build worker unity, both nationally and internationally, to overcome exploitation and to build a society based on justice and equality. *Aluta continua – the struggle continues.*

From the Korean Trade Union Congress:

KTUC and Korean workers would like to remember, together with all South African workers, the spirit of May Day, freedom and equality, and celebrate May Day in one accord. We sincerely wish that South African workers win the true political freedom, human dignity and equality. In particular, we hope that South African workers will show a paragon of success to the oppressed of the world.

Freedom, Peace and Bread for us, the workers!

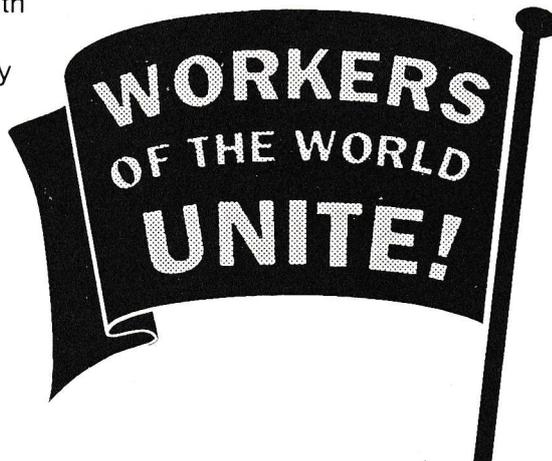
Hurrah for South African workers!

Hurrah for stable solidarity between Korean workers and South African workers!

From the National Union of Namibian Workers:

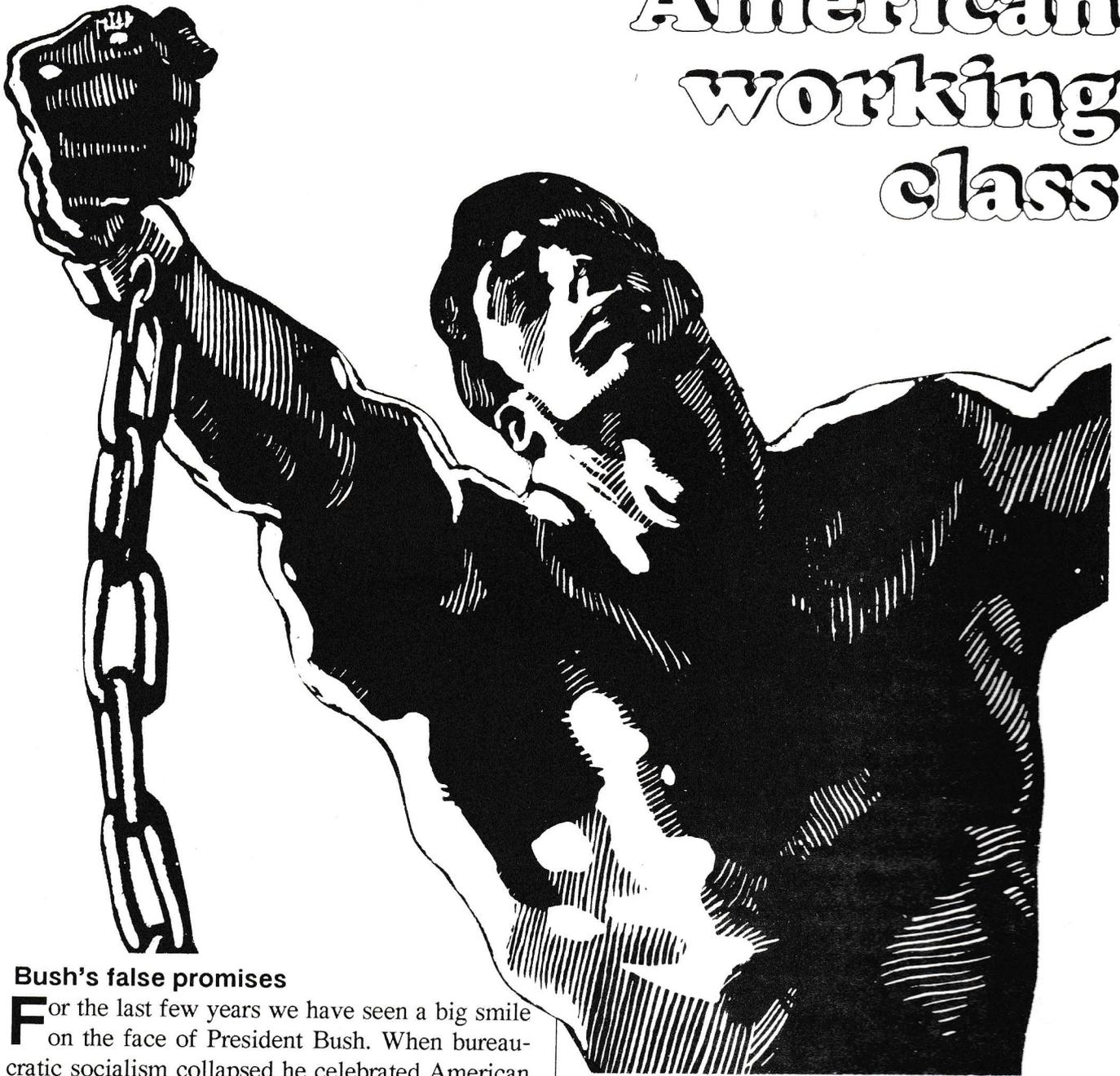
Realisation has begun to dawn on the part of the South African regime that it cannot forever suppress people's desires for change in South Africa. As changes are now imminent in your country, we the Namibian Workers under the banner of NUNW would like on this international workers day, to pledge our support to fellow South African workers in your struggle to ensure positive changes in your country. We are hopeful

that the coming changes in South Africa will rightfully benefit all the South African workers whose immense contribution to the development of the South African economy has made South Africa what it is today. *Workers of the world unite!*





The struggles of the American working class



Bush's false promises

For the last few years we have seen a big smile on the face of President Bush. When bureaucratic socialism collapsed he celebrated American imperialist power by invading Iraq. He promised that America would lead humanity into a New World Order of democracy and prosperity.

But the truth is that the New World Order will bring the majority of the world under tighter control and deeper exploitation by capitalism. As competition between capitalist countries and big multinational companies increases, they become more brutal in their search for low wages across the world. In the last issue of *WORKERS' WORLD* we wrote articles about how the new promises of capitalism

are false and are just forcing greater poverty, unemployment, insecurity and division on working people throughout the world.

Bush is not only lying to the world outside America's borders. The promise of prosperity and democracy is also false inside the USA. Underneath all the celebrations and boasting of American capitalism is a mountain of suffering and anger. Bush's tears after the Los Angeles riots are the tears of the executioner who has been found with blood on his hands.

The false promise of American capitalism

It is true that American capitalism gave a good standard of living to its workers for many years after World War Two. The poverty and suffering created across the world by imperialism has always allowed the advanced capitalist countries to make concessions to their own workers.

But in the early 1970's American capitalism started to experience serious problems. The profits of bosses began to fall and they were forced to restructure their capitalism within the world economy. A big part of their strategy was to find new ways of squeezing profits out of American workers. Since that time the policies of the American government have forced down wages, pushed thousands into unemployment, eaten away welfare services, stolen trade union powers, shifted the tax burden more and more to the working people, and have left education, housing, and public health in ruins.

At the same time the wealth of the bosses has increased and the government has helped to rescue bankrupt companies. Today 10% of the population owns 70% of the wealth. While the wealthy show off their luxury and riches to the rest of the world with the false promise that this is what the free market will bring, the majority of American people live in poverty and frustration.

The false promise of American democracy

It is not only the American capitalist economy that offers nothing to humanity. The promise of American democracy is also a lie. It is a system of oppression and dictatorship that puts political power in the hands of the wealthy. Behind the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, democratic elections, and freedom for the individual, is the oppressive violence of racism, sexism, strike-breaking, homelessness and unemployment that form the backbone of democratic capitalist society.

With their wealth, American bosses have bought the collaboration of the trade union leadership. With their wealth they keep politics out of the reach of the working class. With their wealth they control the media. With their wealth they have built a system that pretends to offer free choice but has stolen and crushed every attempt by the working class to build its own independent road of struggle. American democracy is possible because the working class has been tied by chains of class collaboration. American democracy is the dictatorship of the American bosses.

Where is the voice of struggle?

It is not difficult to see the poverty, violence and oppression of American capitalism. It is not difficult to see the anger and frustration of the majority of the people. But maybe what is difficult to see is an organised struggle of workers for a better society. When we look at the unions we see many corrupt leaders shaking hands with the bosses and their government. When we look at the political system we see the trade unions supporting bosses' parties.

To understand the chains that hold down the struggle and politics of the working class we must look at history. In that history we can see how the bosses put trade union leaders deep into their pockets. In that history we can see how this collaboration tied the working class to the tail of the bosses' liberal Democratic Party. But also in that history we can see that there are traditions of struggle within the working class that promise a better future – traditions of worker democracy, worker control and a socialist vision. And we need to see how American workers today are building these traditions into a more confident voice of struggle.

The American labour movement before the Second World War

In the first 40 years of this century two traditions of trade unionism developed in the USA. From the end of the 19C came the conservative craft unionism of the American Federation of Labour (AFL). As capitalist industry expanded, this tradition was challenged by militant industrial unionism – first through the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and later by the Congress for Industrial Organisations (CIO). The CIO was first set up as a committee of ten industrial unions inside the AFL in 1935, but by 1938 had split to form an independent movement.

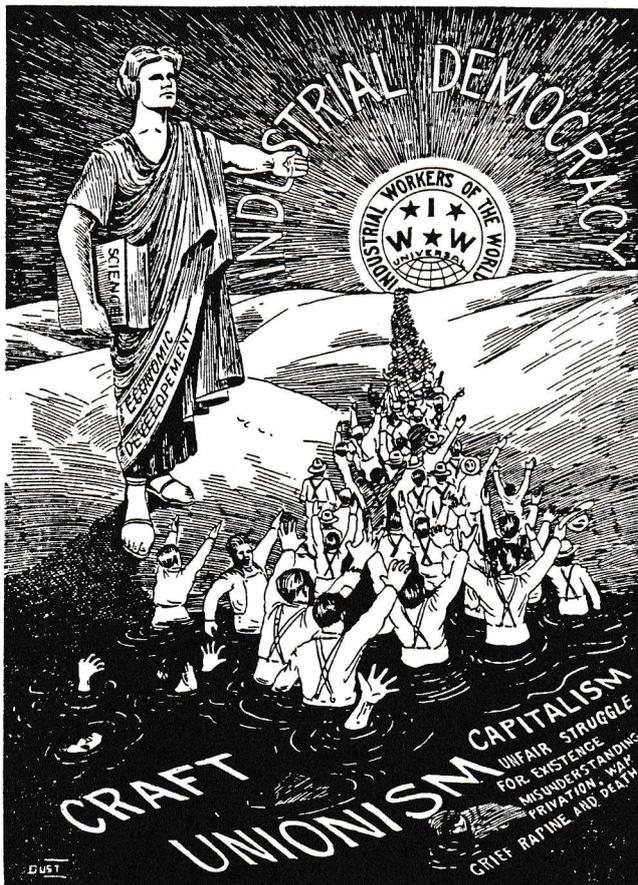
The difference at that time between the AFL and the CIO was partly because the AFL only organised skilled workers and the CIO unions organised semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the large industries. But there was also a difference in the politics of their work. The AFL was already in the pockets of the bosses and saw its job as simply to improve wages and benefits inside capitalism. The CIO developed a much more militant politics, taking up issues outside the workplace and presenting a radical challenge to the bosses. But the militant politics of the CIO only lasted ten years, and by the 1950's the CIO leadership was in deep collaboration with the bosses.

This collaboration took two forms. Firstly, the CIO helped the bosses to build a system of industrial relations which turned the unions into capitalist supervisors in the workplace. Organisations of workers were turned into "business unions." Secondly, the CIO smashed all attempts within the organised working class to build a working class political movement, and tied the trade unions to the tail of the liberal bosses' party, the Democrats. We must look at the history of how the American bosses used the CIO as a channel to silence the American working class. We must see what this means for the American working class today.

Class collaboration during the Second World War

To understand how workers lost control of the CIO and why the CIO leadership handed the unions over to the bosses, we must look at the history of struggle since the time of the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. This was when the seeds of class collaboration were planted.

When the American government took the country into war against Japan and Germany, it was determined to bring the working class under tight control. The 1930's had been full of militant working class struggle which had led to the formation of



the CIO. The so-called democratic president, Roosevelt, spoke sweet words about national unity and patriotism which persuaded the union leadership that they should put the class struggle away and enter a tripartite social contract with the bosses and the government.

The government set up a War Labour Board where the three parties would decide jointly on production, labour relations and wages. From the start the union leaders were treated like very junior partners and were used to persuade workers to accept policies which attacked them in every way. The union leaders did not see this but they felt important and comfortable in meetings with the bosses and the government.

Through the Wage Labour Board unions won a few concessions. A law was passed which said that workers who joined a union could not leave that union until the next round of negotiations. Stop-order facilities were also granted to unions.

But workers had to pay a heavy price for these small victories. Wages were frozen, strikes were banned, workers were not allowed to change jobs, the police and military were allowed to break strike action, bargaining was taken away from the shopfloor and put in the hands of central government bodies, and management was given full control of the workplace.

These were the agreements that the AFL and CIO leaders accepted, at a time when prices were increasing, women and black workers were flooding into employment and into organisation, and at a time when workers felt confident to struggle. Even without the support of their leadership, workers staged one strike after another against the hardships forced on them by the bosses' war.

But there was no progressive leadership. Even the Communist Party, which had big support amongst workers, encouraged class collaboration. Following the Popular Front policy of Stalin, the Communist Party of the USA refused to struggle against the bosses' war and helped to push American workers and their unions into an alliance with the bosses and their government.

After the war: bosses on the attack

At the end of the war the bosses were determined not to lose the control that the wartime collaboration had given them. They knew that they could not crush the unions completely, but they felt threatened by the growth of militancy and worker power on the shopfloor before and during the war.



*President Roosevelt of the Democratic Party
winning union collaboration*

At the end of the war they immediately took action to limit the issues that unions could negotiate and to make sure that they kept control of their businesses. In 1946 Ford workers were forced to accept an agreement that continued the ban on strikes and which gave bosses the right to decide how many shopstewards workers should have. Another big victory of the bosses at this time was at General Motors. In 1946 the United Auto Workers demanded large wage increases with no increase in car prices. The bosses stood firm in their resistance and eventually got the union leadership to agree that wage increases be linked to increased productivity. Other bosses followed the pattern set at Ford and General Motors. For many years to come bosses successfully forced unions to link their wage demands to productivity.

The attack on workers at the end of the war came also from the government. In 1946 Truman was elected as the Republican President and in the following year passed the Taft-Hartley Act. This law destroyed the gains that workers had won in the Wagner Act of 1935 when they had won the right to organise. The Taft-Hartley Act said that unions must supply detailed information about membership and finances before they would get recognition; it banned the closed shop; it made it very difficult to

have a legal strike and it banned solidarity strikes; it gave bosses the power to order a union to show its support at any time; and the Act said that a union could only make use of state industrial relations machinery if it could prove that none of its members were communists or political radicals.

Clearly, the CIO unions could have fought this brutal law, but the leadership did nothing serious to organise resistance. Some unions staged protests and marches but there was no organised or coordinated mobilisation. Already the CIO leadership had lost contact with its membership and with the needs and politics of working class struggle. Already it was feeling more comfortable in its collaboration with the bosses and the government. There were many signs of this even in these early days. For example, even though the CIO opened its doors to women and black workers it did nothing to defend them at the end of the war when they faced big retrenchments.

The American bosses and their government were clear about what they wanted from the union leadership. They wanted a channel through which they could crush the spirit and confidence of workers to struggle. And the union leadership provided this channel. From the end of the 1940's the politics of the bosses was forced onto the American working class through the trade union leadership.

Surrendering the unions to the bosses

The class collaboration of the union and political leadership of the American working class during World War 2, laid the foundations for a big attack on working class politics. During the war the CIO leaders resisted grassroots pressure to help set up a workers' political party. Instead they formed the CIO Political Action Committee which would mobilise support and votes for the bosses' liberal Democratic Party. This was part of their wartime collaboration with the Democratic president, Roosevelt.

With its policy of the Popular Front, the Communist Party also rejected the plan for an independent workers' party and supported the CIO's partnership with the Democratic Party. In this way the unions became completely tied to the political leadership of the bosses. The political influence of the unions was not built through independent organisation and action of the working class, but carried out by labour leaders who made deals with the influential bourgeois politicians.



In its early days the CIO built a militant spirit among workers. By the 1950s it had become a weapon of the bosses.

This class collaboration politics had two immediate effects in the 1940's and 1950's. Firstly, it meant that workers were not organised politically to wage major battles against attacks like the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act. Secondly, it left workers defenceless against the huge anti-communist witch-hunts of the late 1940's and 1950's, a persecution which further silenced American workers politically.

At the end of World War 2, when Stalin extended his control over Eastern Europe, the Cold War between the capitalist west and the Soviet Union began. In order to mobilise public support for its anti-communist campaign, the American government began a ruthless campaign against all groups on the left. It did not even show any mercy to the Communist Party which had collaborated during the war. The anti-communist crusade was supported by the union leadership. At its 1946 convention, the CIO leaders made clear that no "interference" by communists in the unions would be tolerated. The Taft-Hartley Law was used to expel radicals from the labour movement. This persecution resulted in the repression of all criticism, debate and democracy inside the trade unions.

Political repression inside the trade unions helped to strengthen the control of the bureaucratic leadership. During the war the unions had become increasingly centralised. Against this concentration of power, the only balance was the active communication and organisational work at a local and workplace level. But it was the radical activists who kept this grassroots democratic practice alive, and it was this layer that was wiped out by the political repression of the Cold War years.

Business unionism in control

By the end of the 1950s the narrow bureaucratism of business trade unionism was in place, the unions had been purged of communists and radicals, internal democracy had been smashed, and the political activity of the organised labour movement had been reduced to lending support to the bosses' Democratic Party and to the personal influence that union leaders had with famous people.

The drift of the CIO into business unionism was formally symbolised in the merging of the AFL and CIO into the AFL/CIO in the 1955. Trade unions affiliated to the once-militant CIO had become huge administrative machines with little contact with worker members. A good example of this bureaucratisation can be seen in the United Automobile Workers' (UAW) union which had a militant and rich life in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1947 Walter Reuther took over the leadership and led an anti-communist campaign. By 1949 all opposition to his leadership had been removed. In 1951 the annual national congresses were replaced with congresses every two years. Workers were left to watch and obey. In the words of the Teamster president in the 1950's:

"Unions are big business. Why should truck drivers and bottle washers be allowed to make decisions affecting union policy? Would any corporation allow it?"

This bureaucratisation of the unions meant that engagement with management was taken more and more out of workers hands. Bargaining was increasingly centralised, with little or no power being organised at a local shopfloor level. By the end of the 1960's 75% of unions were only negotiating new wage deals every 3 years and a huge army of labour professionals and specialists were running the unions. In the UAW, although there was no major increase in membership between 1949 and 1970, the union staff increased from 407 to 1335.

The routinism of collective bargaining led to the decline of the solidarity bargaining of the 1940's, where unions in different sectors united around their wage struggles. By the late 1950's there was little solidarity between unions and wage issues were fought separately, industry by industry. Strikes were turned into routine and passive activities, heavily controlled by management and union leadership as harmless ways in which workers could "let off steam".

During the 1950s and 1960s the intellectuals of the bosses created a whole culture which removed all talk of class struggle. Because the anti-communist repression had forced socialist intellectuals and organisations into silence, American workers were now bombarded with the culture and values of the bosses. The American dream was that every worker could own a car and a house and build a happy nuclear family. This ideology of individual wealth formed the foundation of business unionism – increase your wages and don't worry about the class struggle.

What made it possible for business unionism to succeed was the big economic boom in America after the war – an economic prosperity that hid away from workers the need to struggle and which gave their union leaders something to deliver from the bosses. American capitalism experienced an incredible growth during the 1950s and 1960s. In this period of boom, bosses were willing to buy the silence of American workers with large wage increases. Wage increases were tied to productivity, and since productivity was high, wage negotiations brought high rewards to American workers. For almost twenty years the class struggle was softened by the ability of American Imperialism to pass on

some of its earnings to the American working class. Between 1950 and 1965 American workers won uninterrupted wage gains and increased benefits. Business unionism succeeded in becoming strong because it worked – for a while.

Rank and file rebellion in the late 1960s

In the 1960s the economic boom in America brought high profits to bosses and high wages to workers. But even underneath this prosperity, there was growing anger amongst workers. There were three developments in the American working class which caused this. The first was the growing number of women workers, especially in the public sector, who turned to union organisation only to find deeply entrenched gender discrimination.

The second, was the growth of black working class anger at exploitation and oppression. Like women, black workers were also faced with discrimination in the CIO. During the second half of the 1950s black workers began to organise themselves at a local level in the steel and auto industries. This grew into a powerful black movement inside the CIO which forced the federation to drop its own racist practices. But the CIO did not actively organise and build around the growing black working class movement.

In the second half of the 1960s urban black working class anger exploded into revolt. It was the biggest explosion of worker struggle since the 1930's. Business unionism was not prepared to build this, and the AFL/CIO leadership limited itself to calling on the government for social reforms. Black workers in the 1960s had the anger, the strength and the vision, to rebuild a militant working class movement.





Local union organisation of black workers in the late 1960s

Some leaders, especially at a local level in the unions saw this and tried to build it. Some national black political leaders like Martin Luther King saw the need to organise black workers. In the auto industry the black Revolutionary Union Movement which was linked to the Black Power Movement attempted to link their struggles with organised white workers. But by the end of the 1960s the trade union leadership had exhausted these rank and file movements inside the unions. In the broader political struggle, the black revolts of the late 1960s were taken by their leadership into a liberal reform movement.

The third development of the 1960s was the growth of resistance on the shopfloor to pressure from the bosses and the government to increase productivity. The collaboration of the AFL/CIO leadership with the politicians of the bosses, gave the Democratic Party government of Kennedy, a direct influence on industrial relations. More and more this government forced unions to tie wage claims to national productivity increases. More and more, management took control of production and technology. More and more, the bosses and the government increased the pressure on workers to increase productivity and work overtime.

This pressure led to an outburst of rank and file action in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Wildcat strikes broke out across the country, reaching a peak in 1970 in the coal mines, the post office, and at

General Motors. Every such action was contained and exhausted by the resistance of the leadership. And within unions, workers built rank and file reform movements like Miners for Democracy and Teamsters United Rank and File to challenge the union bureaucracy. Most of these grassroots movements of the early 1970s failed to build links across unions and industries and were suppressed by the union leaderships.

The ability of the trade union leadership to defend business unionism and to hold off the challenge of women workers, black revolt, and rank and file militancy, further weakened the confidence and strength of American workers. The bosses could put more victories in their pockets.

The crisis of the 1970s and a new attack from the bosses

The early 1970s brought a sudden end to the economic boom. The international economic recession and the declining international economic power of the USA, forced American capital to restructure itself locally and internationally and to organise itself politically in a new way to impose its rule on workers. The tradition of business unionism and class collaboration which had been built in times of prosperity, could not adapt to open class warfare. Right up until today the American unions, under the AFL/CIO leadership, have been more of an obstacle than a leadership to American workers under attack.

In the early 1970s the growth rates of advanced capitalist countries slowed down. Because profits were falling, more and more countries were taking loans for investment capital. With the growth of borrowing and debt, inflation increased rapidly. To fight against the decline in profits, advanced capitalist countries began to compete for profitable places to invest. Bosses crossed borders with their investments like never before, changing the location and structure of industrial production across the world. More intense competition brought big changes to how capital and companies were structured. Technological development was speeded up, and the production process transformed.

For American bosses the international economic crisis was very serious. American capital was losing its world dominance in the face of European and Japanese competition. To strengthen itself American capital began to reorganise itself. The 1970s saw the growth of huge corporations as big companies merged. At the top of the these corporations sat wealthy finance capitalists, who

were the strategists for the bosses' class. To develop greater security of investments, corporations turned into conglomerates, which meant that they invested in a wide range of sectors.

From the early 1970s American bosses increased their foreign investments, looking for a higher rate of profit in low wage countries like Brazil, Mexico, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines. American foreign investment went up from \$49 billion in 1960 to \$579 billion in 1980. The pressure to increase profits also sped up changes in technology.

Each of these developments aimed to undermine worker strength and trade union power. The concentration of capital in huge corporations made engagement by unions increasingly complex and bureaucratised. Conglomerates could easily endure strike action in one sector because they were drawing profits from another. The export of capital and technological changes led to the loss of 4 million jobs between 1973 and 1980.

The bosses also implemented other strategies to weaken trade union power. Technological change made it possible to split up production into small units. Small decentralised plants, often located in areas where unions were weak, began to undermine strongholds of worker organisation. Through this restructuring, bosses also began to break out of bargaining units, and were able to play workers, plants and unions off against one another. This ate away at the common wage standards that workers had won inside each industry.

To attack workers' wages and benefits, bosses used the threat of plant closure. Increasingly, especially in the auto industry, bosses forced unions to back down on workers' demands by threatening to move their plant to low wage areas inside or outside the country. Similar threats were used to impose productivity drives on workers. Also during the 1970s, bosses began more and more to ignore and undermine labour laws. There were an increasing number of unfair dismissals and harrassment of union activists. Even recognised unions found it increasingly difficult to get employers to negotiate wage contracts.

The international economic crisis had forced on American bosses an urgent restructuring of the economy and of their exploitation of workers. To achieve this, American bosses acted as a very well organised class. Their organisation and their influence was not limited to the workplace – they also needed a more aggressive anti-worker government.

Bosses give new direction to government

In 1972 the biggest 125 corporations set up an organisation called the Business Roundtable. Armed with hundreds of lawyers, economists and professional consultants, these organised bosses put pressure on political leaders to crush progressive labour legislation, consumer protection laws, and any measures that could restrict the freedom of capital. They developed a political programme which demanded cuts in spending on social services and a change in tax laws for the benefit of the bosses. The politics of the Business Roundtable was to become the foundation for the politics of "Reaganism" in the 1980s.

But well before Reagan became president, the American bosses took their programme into both the conservative Republican Party and the liberal Democratic Party. A big part of their campaign was to only offer money to politicians who supported their politics. With \$84 billion in its pockets to support election campaigns, the Business Roundtable did not find it difficult to buy politicians. The "liberal" days of the Democratic Party disappeared and it became increasingly right wing in its support for the aggressive policies of capital.

The politics of Reaganism, did not start with Reagan but with Jimmy Carter from the Democratic Party who was elected president in 1976. He began a "national austerity" programme and put pressure on the unions to hold back wage demands. He also offered tax cuts to business and cut government spending on social services. None of this was surprising because Jimmy Carter was nothing more than the paid servant of the Business Roundtable. What was tragic was that he won the election with the support of the AFL/CIO in the tradition of class collaboration.



Reagan and Bush – 12 years of right-wing capitalist rule

What Carter began in the middle 1970s under the close watch of the American bosses, has been continued since then by the Republican Presidents, Reagan and Bush. When Reagan was elected president in 1981 he showed clearly where he stood by using the army and scabs to smash a strike of airport workers organised by the union, PATCO. The brutality of American capitalism has grown bigger and bigger, as the crisis of profit making has become even more severe.



The 1981 PATCO strike was smashed by Reagan with the army and scab labour

Right through the 1980s American bosses faced increased competition from Germany and Japan. Even the industries which America has always dominated, like the automobile, aircraft, electronics, and armaments industries are being taken over on the international market by European, Korean and Japanese companies. American bosses can no longer hide the weakness of the American economy.

Since 1990 the crisis has come out into the open. In December 1991 the big aircraft company PANAM was declared bankrupt. Japanese electronics companies are pushing America more and more out of the market. In 1991 General Motors, Ford and Crysler motor companies suffered huge losses as Japanese and Korean cars flooded the US market. Last year the 230 top US companies had a 23% loss of profits. Even American banks, which have for a long time dominated the international capitalist financial market are in decline.

The first strategy of the American bosses is to make American workers pay for this crisis through massive retrenchments, low wages, and increasing cuts on benefits and welfare services. Real wages are today 4% lower than they were 25 years ago. The IBM electronics company plans to put 25 thousand employees on the streets this year. Increasingly, local government and state services have been

retrenching workers. Since 1984 General Motors has shut down 51 plants and retrenched 130 thousand workers and today plans to close another 21 plants and shed another 74 thousand jobs. Today one third of American workers are in casual, temporary or contract employment, which makes it easier for bosses to dismiss them and which makes it difficult for unions to organise them.

The second strategy of the American bosses is to seek new ways of increasing their profits. More and more companies are moving their investments to countries where labour is cheap and to parts of America where unions are weak. The biggest part of this strategy is to create the North American Free Trade Area by linking the USA, Canada and Mexico in an economic union. The plan here is to build a capitalist region under US control that can compete with a united Europe. For American bosses it means that they would be free to pick up their factories and take them to Mexico where labour is cheap and unions are weak. Even though General Motors is shutting down plants and retrenching American workers, it has set up huge plants in Mexico and is today the biggest private employer in that country.

The American labour movement today

The anger of the oppressed and exploited in America is today coming out into the open. Even in our own newspapers which like to hide the struggles of workers, we have seen these stories. When a racist American court let white policemen go free after they assaulted a black motorist, the black working class community of Los Angeles exploded in anger to show the world the truth of life under American capitalism.

We have also seen news of the 5 month strike of 12 thousand motor workers against the Caterpillar bosses. Two thousand workers employed by a walnut processing company have been on strike for 8 months demanding that their wages should be increased to what they were in 1985. 15 thousand members of the Teamsters Union are preparing to strike against the Carhaul companies in their struggle for wage increases and centralised bargaining.

Even with these struggles we cannot say that American workers are moving forward with great confidence. Today the unions are very weak and only 16% of American workers are organised. Union membership has fallen from 22 million in 1975 to 14 million today. Some of this is because of retrenchments, industrial restructuring and the increase of part-time and casual work.

But even in the face of these attacks, the official union leadership has done nothing creative to defend workers. They have become the policemen of the bosses, imposing productivity schemes and accepting wage cuts, retrenchments, and reduced benefits. In exchange, the unions have won job protection for a small layer of highly skilled workers. In doing this they have helped the bosses to coopt this layer against the masses of semi and unskilled, unorganised, casual, women and black workers.

But alongside the power of business unionism, has been the growth of new grassroots movements. These movements grew out of the defeated wildcat strikes of the 1980's where a new militancy and experience of solidarity action provided the foundations for more long term organisation. These movements are not coordinated and have many different political affiliations. But they all have the goal of fighting for worker control, worker democracy and worker solidarity.

In the last ten years these movements have built links and solidarity action with community organisations, womens' struggles, and socialist groups. Against the bosses' plan to create free movement for American capital between the United States, Canada and Mexico, these movements are building international solidarity networks across America's borders. They are also building links with workers in Central America, the Philippines, and South Korea.

The best examples of these organised movements are the New Directions Movement in the United Auto Workers and the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) in the Teamsters' Union. At the end of 1991 the TDU succeeded in removing their corrupt leadership and replacing it with reformist leaders who have committed themselves to rebuilding democracy and a militant spirit in the union. It is this reformed Teamsters that is mobilising for national action against Carhaul bosses.

One of the biggest challenges facing American workers today is to break from dependence on the political parties of the bosses. It is almost 20 years since the Democratic Party gave up its social democracy to push aggressive capitalist policies. But still it has the support of the AFL/CIO leadership.



Unemployed steelworkers and their families queuing for free food

Today the American people have lost faith in the government of Republicans and Democrats and some are being attracted to right-wing nationalist politics by conservative populist leaders like Buchanan. But the leadership of the unions does nothing more than offer its support to a Democratic candidate, Bill Clinton, for the coming elections. Although the AFL/CIO describes him as a leader "who cares about working people", all his policies are pro-capitalist. Just at a time when increasing strike action and the Los Angeles uprising show the anger and energy and willingness of workers to struggle, this slavishness will guarantee that American workers will show no interest in the coming elections.

For American workers to build confidence in their own strength to control their unions and challenge the bosses, they need to look at their history so that they can understand how they got to where they are today. It is also important for us to look at their history. In this way we can get close to the experiences and struggles of comrades in another country.

We can then see how we can use our own experience of organisation and struggle to give them support. We can find ways of supporting their strikes and we can find ways to build links with the progressive movements inside the unions. And we can also learn lessons from the history of American trade unionism because it shows us the dangers of collaborating with the bosses and putting our organisations in their pockets.

The defeat at Caterpillar – lessons for unions

On April 14 this year the five month strike by United Auto Workers (UAW) against Caterpillar ended in defeat. It was a brave struggle of 13 thousand workers against one of the most powerful and aggressive bosses in the United States. The strike began over wages, health-care benefits and job security. The bosses used scabs to force the leadership to accept an offer that fell far below workers' demands, and the agreement did not guarantee that strikers would get their jobs back.

The anger of workers at their leadership sell-out is huge. The union had huge resources for the strike and had won support from the Teamsters and the Steelworkers. Community organisations were mobilising for civil disobedience action. Solidarity stoppages by NUMSA workers against Caterpillar in South Africa and by Caterpillar workers in Belgium, showed the worker pressure that was possible. But the UAW leadership did not develop a strategy that could make use of this strength.

A progressive labour magazine in the United States, *Labor Notes*, had this to say about the Caterpillar defeat:

"Large armies used to fight wars on the battlefields by standing in the open and shooting at each other at close range. But in modern war it would be suicide to follow these rules. The ranks of the American labour movement are being crushed because our leaders do not understand the new rules of labour relations.

The rules changed when Reagan crushed the PATCO strike in 1981. Before PATCO, large strikes just involved seeing who could survive longest. The company would close down and the workers sat at home. Everyone waited to see who would give in first. Reagan's strategy at PATCO taught the bosses that the unions could not put up much opposition if they brought in scabs.

And after PATCO came Phelps-Dodge, Hormel, International Paper, Greyhound, and Eastern Airlines. Although there was resistance and solidarity in most of these strikes, the unions were not able or willing to use more risky and sometimes illegal tactics. With each defeat, the hole that the labour movement is in got deeper and deeper.

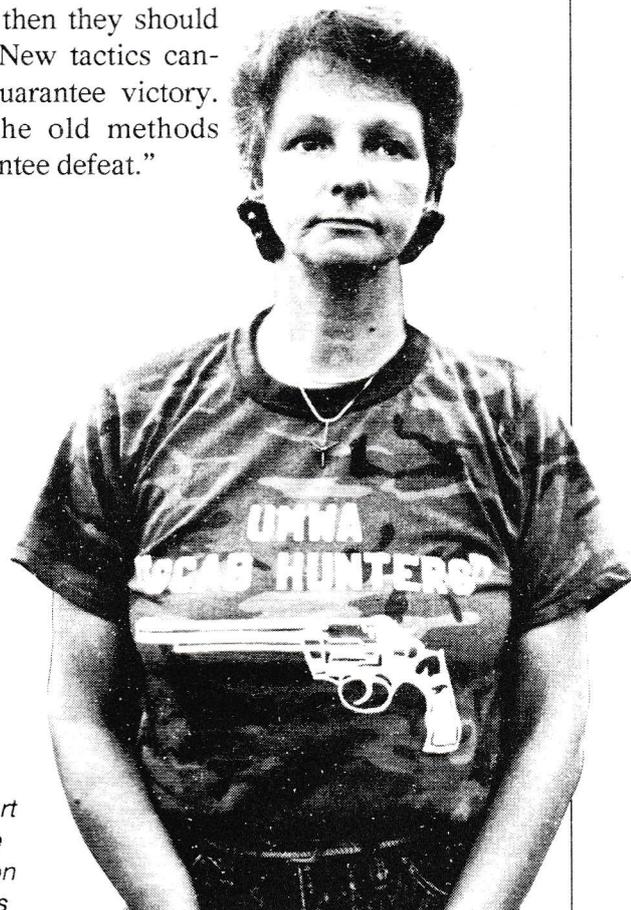
And then came Caterpillar. The defeat of the UAW sends the same message as the PATCO

defeat did – the union movement is weak, disarmed and will not fight. Many bosses will see this as the time to attack. If a strong union like the UAW can be defeated by using scabs, then no union is secure. We have to accept that the old rules of fighting will not work anymore. Luckily, we do have a model to learn from: the 1989 Pittston miners' strike.

The Pittston strike was run by a union that was not afraid to take big chances when it had to. It was willing to use all its resources and ask for help from other unions and from the community. Strikers and their families sat down in front of coal trucks. Students sat down in Pittston's office building. Miners occupied a key plant. The union built Camp Solidarity and asked everyone to come. They put up a strike leader to run for local government. They did all this in the face of interdicts and fines that could have broken the union.

It is not any one tactic that the Pittston miners used that won. It was their overall approach. They were daring and creative. They took risks. They organised actions that drew in their supporters. The members worked full-time to run the strike. They turned their strike into a struggle.

If the UAW leaders are not able to work like this to defend workers against the weapon of scabbing, then they should quit. New tactics cannot guarantee victory. But the old methods guarantee defeat."



Strike support for the Pittston miners

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS and POLITICAL COMPROMISES

Lessons from Zimbabwe



Today many comrades are worried that we are making big political compromises in our negotiations at CODESA. At the Lancaster House negotiations in 1979, the Zimbabwean liberation movement made serious compromises to the demands of the people. What were these compromises, why were they made and what effect have they had over the last 10 years?

Pressure from the bosses and the government to drop our demands

In South Africa today, everyone is talking about the need for a new constitution. Many organisations and parties have come out in favour of a negotiated settlement. The establishment of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and the discussions taking place there, have raised questions about the kind of settlement that might be negotiated.

In a country where we have experienced years of bitter struggle and conflict, we now hear many calls for reconciliation and compromise between the ruling class and the oppressed masses. The bosses and the apartheid government are trying to prevent us from winning our basic demand for one-person-

one-vote. They are demanding that there must be group rights and minority rights. They are putting forward the demand that whites must have protected seats in a new parliament.

But it is not only in the constitution that the organisations of the oppressed are being asked to compromise their positions. We are being pressured to also drop the only demand that can bring real changes in our conditions of life and work, our demand for *control over the economy*. We are being told that we must drop our demand for nationalisation as a policy which will address the inequalities created by apartheid. We are also told that our demands for higher wages, affordable housing, lower prices and so on, cannot be met overnight. We are urged to be "realistic".

Calls to compromise in our organisations

It would be easy to ignore this advice if it only came from the ruling class because they clearly want to protect their interests. The constitutional proposals put forward by parties of the ruling class such as the National Party, aim to maintain the present system of economic exploitation. But the fact that calls similar to those of the ruling class, are being made within our organisations, demands that we look at them seriously.

At the beginning of the year, the ANC President Nelson Mandela, said that the ANC could accept that seats be specially kept for whites in a new parliament. The ANC is considering allowing "sunset clauses" into the constitution which would give certain rights to whites. There have also been statements from the ANC saying that in the first few years after the new constitution has been drafted, it could enter into some power-sharing plan with the National Party. We have also seen our demand for nationalisation, as a basic measure to remove economic inequality, being pushed more and more out of our policy documents. All these suggestions are said to be attempts to allay white fears and start a process of reconciliation.

When we hear these proposals we need to look at our demands and see what we are being asked to compromise. We must find out why our leaders are suggesting these compromises. Sometimes we are not aware that we are compromising. Sometimes the leaders do not tell us that they are compromising. They tell us that we are winning.

We may see that we have weaknesses and agree that we have to make compromises. But when we do this we must always be honest and clear. We must always ask ourselves:

- What are the basic demands of our people?
- What are the compromises we are being asked to make?
- What do these compromises do to our demands?
- What is the motivation being given for the call for compromises ?
- How honestly are our leaders approaching our weaknesses? Are they saying we are winning when they are throwing our demands out of the window one by one?
- Is it necessary to water down our demands ?
- How can we ensure that we overcome our weaknesses?
- What proposals are being made to move beyond compromises towards the realisation of our demands?

When we discuss these questions and look at the compromises that are being proposed, we must use our own experience of struggle to make judgements. We must look at our experience and see how at times when we were not strong, we managed to overcome our weaknesses. We must look at the weapons that we used to solve the problems that previously confronted us. We must look at past compromises we made and how they affected our struggle. We must not forget that even in the past, we had to make choices. We must learn from our experience.

And it is not only our own direct experience that we must use. We can also look at what our comrades in other countries did when faced with similar problems. We must look at how our comrades in other countries answered these questions which we are trying to answer now. In this article we will look at the compromises that were made by the Patriotic Front leaders in Zimbabwe in the political settlement that led to independence from settler rule.

The struggle for freedom in Zimbabwe

The people of Zimbabwe fought long before they won their freedom. Since the 1890s when their country was taken over by British colonialists, they struggled to win the right to determine their destiny. This was a long and bitter struggle. The people of Zimbabwe took up arms to liberate their country. The war of liberation took up more than fifteen years and many people lost their lives in the course of that struggle.

For many years before independence, the state in Zimbabwe was controlled by a privileged white minority. This minority consisted of a class of farmers and capitalists who made up 5% of the total population of the country. They owned more than 70% of the country's wealth. The economy of the country was geared towards the production of luxury goods for this tiny minority. The economy was also dominated by multi-national and foreign companies, particularly from South Africa. While the minority had a comfortable existence, the vast majority lived and worked under terrible conditions. They suffered from malnutrition, low wages, unemployment, a lack of health facilities, and large-scale illiteracy.

The most important demand the people of Zimbabwe fought for was for access to their land. In the 1890's the colonialists pushed many people off the land. Peasants were moved to areas similar to



Ian Smith's government declared that Rhodesia was independent of Britain in November 1985. This picture of a street in Bulawayo, just after the declaration of UDI, shows what "independence" would mean for the majority – continued oppression

"homelands" – known as Tribal Trust Lands. Although laws that affect ownership of land were changed in 1977, at the time of independence most of the fertile land was still owned by white capitalist farmers.

It was not only economic domination that the majority of the Zimbabweans suffered. They were also politically oppressed. They did not enjoy political rights such as the right to vote, the right to form organisations, and the right to go where they wanted to be. Like in South Africa, the minority government in Rhodesia introduced pass laws and other discriminatory laws. Organisations opposed to racism were prohibited and political activists persecuted. Like in South Africa, minority white capitalist rule was enforced through severe repression.

Throughout the years, the different minority governments tried to frustrate the struggle of the African masses by coming with plans of co-opting the leadership of African organisations. As a way of avoiding majority rule, the minority government in 1961 came up with a constitution that gave 15 seats in a parliament of 65 to the African majority. This was rejected by many people in Zimbabwe. The people demanded one-person-one-vote and majority rule. They intensified the armed struggle.

Seeing the escalation of the war, the government of Ian Smith came up with another scheme in 1978. It drew up a constitution which gave Africans under the leadership of Bishop Muzorewa the majority in parliament. Ian Smith and the few white members of parliament gave themselves the right to

veto. Nothing could be concluded in parliament without the agreement and acceptance by the white members of parliament. Even this was rejected by the majority of Zimbabweans.

The Zimbabwean struggle for independence was to end all forms of domination. Independence from colonial British rule and freedom from oppression and exploitation was the vision that united the African majority. Their vision, just like ours and many others, was for political and economic control over their lives. The main demands of the masses were for majority rule, the redistribution of the land and for control over the economy. The Patriotic Front organisations received support in the years leading to independence because they stood for the demands of the majority. ZANU even said that it stood for socialism. It is not an accident that in the elections leading to independence, ZANU received the majority in the elections in 1980.

The compromises made at Lancaster House

Like us, the people of Zimbabwe and their organisations in the period leading up to independence had to make choices on how to take forward their struggle. Like us they were pressurised to compromise their demands and accept certain conditions on their freedom. Pressure was put on them to water down their demands for land, improved living conditions and majority rule. This happened after a long and bitter struggle for independence. – a struggle in which thousands lost their lives.

In a conference convened in 1979 by the British at Lancaster House in London, the Zimbabwean liberation organisations, ZANU and ZAPU (which together made up the Patriotic Front), were forced to compromise the long-standing demands of the Zimbabwean masses. They accepted a constitution that gave the white minority the right to block whatever changes the majority needed.

The Lancaster House meeting was not an elected Constituent Assembly. It was a conference of unelected delegates that drew up the new Zimbabwean constitution. It involved unelected representatives from the government of Bishop Muzorewa and Ian Smith which ruled the country before independence, and representatives of the Patriotic Front (PF) – an umbrella of organisations that brought together ZANU and ZAPU.

At the Lancaster House Conference, an agreement was reached that for the first seven years of independence, 20 of the 100 seats in the new parliament would be put aside for whites. No changes to the constitution could be made without the agreement of these white members of the new parliament.

Also part of the agreement was a Bill of Rights that made any takeover of land and other property without fair compensation illegal for ten years after independence. The agreement reached at Lancaster made it quite clear that for any takeover of property to be legal, the owner had to be a willing seller. Included in the Bill of Rights were clauses which made any attempts to stop people from taking profits out of the country illegal. The agreement also said that the new government must pay pensions to the

civil servants, police and army of the Smith regime. The Lancaster House agreement stated that courts and the way they functioned before independence had to be respected.

When we look at the main demands of the people of Zimbabwe and compare this with the Lancaster House agreement we can clearly see that the agreement heavily compromised the main demands of the Zimbabwean masses. We can see that the compromises were attempts by Britain and Ian Smith to protect minority rule and the capitalist system.

The condition put forward by Ian Smith and Britain for 20 seats to be allocated to whites undermined the people's demand for majority rule. For it was clear that once again the demands and wishes of the majority would be blocked by the white minority.

Also for the Lancaster House Agreement to say that no land could be occupied and to have made the take over of land conditional on adequate compensation, was to leave things as they were. White farmers still maintained their control over the best agricultural land.

Similarly, the clause that stated that no nationalisation without just compensation could take place meant that the government could not really intervene in the economy of the country. The foreign bosses like Anglo-American, Union Carbide and SA Breweries continued to tightly control the economy. By allowing the powerful foreign capitalists to continue taking profits out of the country, frustrated the basic aspirations of the Zimbabwean masses.

Why did the leadership of the Patriotic Front (PF) accept such compromises to liberation? Why did they accept a deal which was clearly designed to keep power in the hands of an exploiting minority and to undermine real majority rule?



Signing the Lancaster House Agreement: Mugabe, Nkomo, with representatives of British imperialism and the stooge Bishop Muzorewa

Pressures to compromise

The Patriotic Front leaders could see clearly that the British imperialists were trying to protect minority interests at the Lancaster House conference. At various points in the negotiations at Lancaster, the Patriotic Front wanted to walk out of the conference.

But pressure on the Patriotic Front from their allies in the Frontline states was great. The governments of Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Botswana provided military bases for the armies of ZANU and ZAPU and provided refugee camps for millions who had fled their country. These governments said that they could not continue supporting the armed struggle. The cost of the war was too great for them. During the war the Rhodesian army conducted raids into these countries destroying railways and bridges. Their economies were also suffering after years of sanctions against the Smith regime.

Another pressure on the Patriotic Front was that the British Government was ready to recognise the puppet Muzorewa government and have sanctions lifted. If the Patriotic Front had walked out of negotiations then this would give the British government an excuse to do this.

The Patriotic Front was also not confident that it could win the armed struggle. Although the armies of the Patriotic Front were winning major victories on the battle front, no clear victory was in sight. ZIPRA and ZANLA had not broken the might of the Rhodesia Army. During the talks the Rhodesian airforce struck right into Zambia and Mozambique, destroying bridges, railways and military bases.

But it was not only due to external pressure that the Patriotic Front accepted the terms of compromise at Lancaster House. Questions about their political strategy also need to be asked.

Weaknesses of Patriotic Front strategy

When we look at the history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, we can see that there was too much emphasis on the armed struggle and not enough attention to building mass organisation and struggle inside the country. Although ZANU and ZAPU enjoyed mass support, this support was not turned into strong organisation. Even the trade unions that existed before independence were weak and divided. They did not engage in struggle by taking up the demands of Zimbabwean workers.



Frontline leaders Kaunda, Nyerere and Machel meeting in Lusaka

The absence of strong mass organisations inside Zimbabwe limited the choices of the Patriotic Front. The dependence on armed struggle made the Patriotic Front dependent for its strength on the support it had from the Frontline states. Without organised mass support inside Zimbabwe, the Patriotic Front did not know if it could keep support away from Muzorewa if sanctions were lifted and peoples' lives improved slightly.

What is also not clear is how the Patriotic Front hope to build socialism if there were no strong organisations of workers and peasants. How could workers build the confidence and knowledge to control society without the experience and foundations of organisation?

Like many liberation movements of the 1960's and 1970's, the movement in Zimbabwe relied too much on the armed struggle. Their strategy did not place enough importance on mass organisation and struggle as the foundation for a strong liberation movement.

Also contributing to the difficult situation in which the Patriotic Front found itself at Lancaster House, was the attitude of the liberation organisations to Britain and other capitalist governments. For many years they had appealed to Britain for their independence. This intensified after the settler regime of Smith declared Rhodesia to be independent without permission from Britain in 1965. Appeals were made to Britain to intervene and declare the white government illegal and to grant independence to the African majority. In the process, the British government was treated as an ally of the oppressed people of Zimbabwe.

When Britain convened the Lancaster House conference, it was doing what the liberation organisations had been calling for. The PF did not oppose the idea of drawing up a new constitution in this unelected assembly. By looking to Britain and other capitalist governments, the PF neglected to build international grassroots solidarity for the masses in Zimbabwe. It was easy for the Frontline governments to put pressure on the Patriotic Front because not enough work had been done to build support for the liberation of Zimbabwe amongst the masses of these countries.

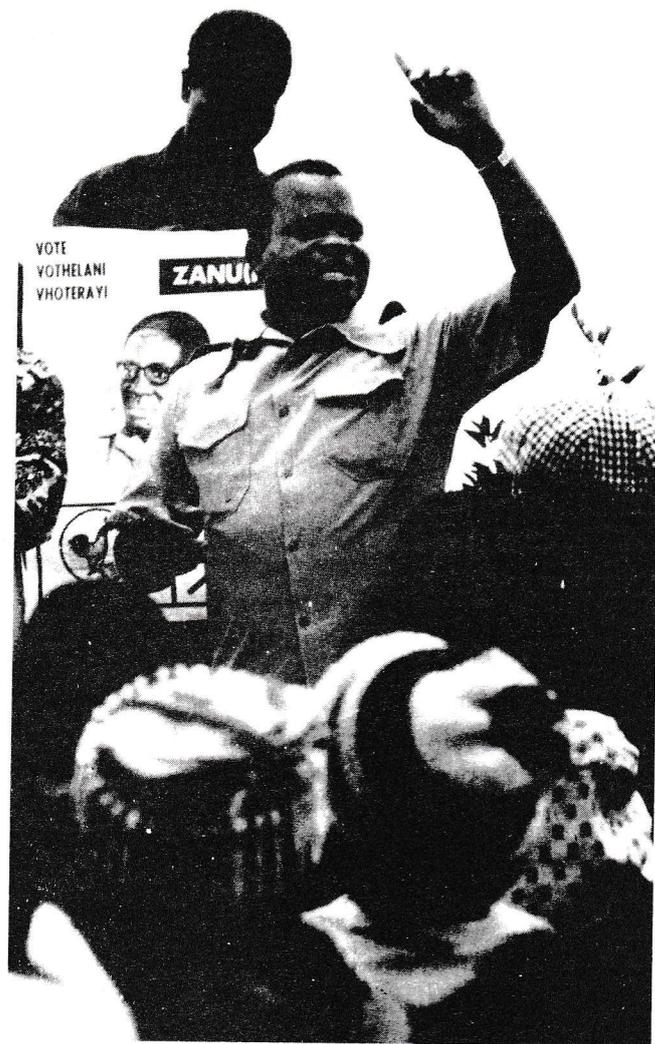
The failure of the Patriotic Front to build strong internal mass organisations and its failure to build international grassroots solidarity, made it difficult for ZANU and ZAPU to resist some of the external pressures on them to compromise.

But for many people, the question of what to do when confronted with the pressure to compromise was not an easy one. Many people had suffered during the war. The Zimbabwe people longed for peace. Although the guerrilla struggle had made advances, victory on the battlefield was not in sight. Many people felt that with a democratic government in power, some of the compromises of Lancaster House could be overcome. It is for this reason that the majority supported ZANU in the 1980 elections.

Zimbabwe today

When the new ZANU PF government came into power they promised to follow economic policies that would ensure growth with equity, the distribution of the wealth and better living conditions. The government then formulated an economic and development plan to address the economic inequalities. The plan aimed to establish a minimum wage for workers and food price controls. Key industries such as transport and health were nationalised as part of the plan. But the power of the foreign bosses over the economy did not change. So although the democratic government introduced plans to remove the inequalities, no fundamental change in the control and running of the economy was made.

Since 1987 the masses' living standards have worsened. Few new jobs are being created, increasing the already high unemployment figure. Prices have steadily increased. Inflation is now 50%. The economic crisis, together with the effects of the drought has meant that basic foods such as maize are only available on the expensive black market. The people that have suffered the most as a result of the crisis have been the workers and peasants.



ZANU organisers campaigning for the 1980 elections

In 1990 the government implemented a new economic plan to address the present crisis. The main reason for the plan, according to the government, was so that the government can "adopt a rational and market-orientated approach to economic development". The economic plan is the Structural Adjustment Programme advised by the international financial institutions of the IMF and World Bank. (See *WORKERS WORLD* No.6 for more information about the policies of these institutions)

The implementation of Structural Adjustment has meant:

- Cutting down government subsidies on food. This has meant a rise of food prices of 40%.
- Dropping price control so prices can increase.
- Dropping government determined wage standards, so bosses can decide what to pay workers.
- Companies can send all their profits out of the country. Because 70 to 80% of the economy is owned by foreign investors, this means that little capital is invested back into the Zimbabwean economy.

- A reduction of government spending on services and the privatisation of sectors such as transport. This has resulted in the retrenchment of civil servants and workers in these sectors. An estimated 26 thousand civil servants will lose their jobs during the next three years.

The implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme is happening twelve years after independence. We can see that this means more hardship and bad living conditions for the poor majority. The reduction of government expenditure on transport, health and education means that it will only be a few that will be able to afford these vital services.

Poverty, unemployment, high food prices, and low wages, have led to massive dissatisfaction amongst the Zimbabwean masses. Many are saying that they do not believe that the present ZANU PF government is serious about addressing the needs of the poor. And many are looking for alternative leaders and organisations that can lead the struggle for better living conditions. There have been reports of calls for the government to resign. University students seem to be in the forefront of this struggle. In the last few months they fought battles with the police in the streets of Harare.

Also reported was a demonstration outside the president's residence by ex-guerrillas who fought in the liberation struggle. These former fighters accused ZANU of having betrayed the aims and principles which they fought for. They pointed to the fact that many of them were unemployed, while the leaders drove in luxury cars and lived in mansions. Also raised by ex-combatants is the fact that members of the Rhodesian army which they fought against are either still in the army or are still receiving state pensions while they remained with no money, no jobs and no houses.

But it is not only amongst the youth and the unemployed that there is increasing disillusionment with the government of Robert Mugabe. Organised workers and their leaders have also voiced criticisms of the present government. In January this year 16 thousand railway workers went on strike demanding higher wages and better living conditions. This strike, led by one of the strongest unions in Zimbabwe (the Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railways Union) expressed the workers' dissatisfaction with starvation wages and bad living conditions.

This is what the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions have to say about the Mugabe government:



“the government is in the forefront of protecting the intentions of employers and will implement what employers demand at the expense of the workers”.

Making the people more angry is the knowledge that while they are being forced to suffer, those in the government are making a fortune out of their positions. In the last few years there have been reports of corruption and gross mismanagement of the government's resources. A popular feeling is expressed in the following statement:

“Mugabe is saying that we must tighten our belts. But they have been tightened too much. Why don't his cabinet ministers – the fat cats – tighten their belts?”

The struggle for socialism is not an easy one. We can see that there were many pressures from powerful imperialism countries for a settlement in Zimbabwe that would not threaten capitalism. But we can also see that even with these pressures, the Zimbabwean liberation movement did not build strategies that could effectively challenge international capitalism and lay the basis for the struggle for socialism. The compromises made at Lancaster House did not give the Zimbabwean masses the building blocks for true liberation. Instead they locked the country into a path of development that has only increased the grip of imperialism and which has deepened mass poverty. ★



Namibia: has the negotiated political settlement compromised workers' rights?

Early this year the SWAPO-led Namibian government passed new labour laws. These laws do not meet some of the basic demands that workers have fought for for years. How can we in South Africa ensure that the Workers' Charter becomes part of our new constitution?

"Workers' rights for a democratic constitution!"

In April 1992 the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) made this comment in its newspaper, the *Namibian Worker*:

"The fight of the workers is still not over as long as important issues such as a 40 hours working week, paid maternity leave and proper notice and severance pay are not included in the Labour Act."

The workers of Namibia fought for a democratically elected government. A government that would put basic worker rights into the constitution of an independent Namibia. A government that would make labour laws to protect workers from profit-hungry bosses.

But when the SWAPO-led government introduced new labour laws to the National Assembly

earlier this year, many of the workers' demands were not met. The Minister of Manpower and Development refused to make large concessions to the NUNW's demands. He said that the new labour law was the best possible compromise between the government, bosses and workers.

Today workers in South Africa face questions like those faced by workers in Namibia. In a joint Bulletin in April/May, COSATU and NACTU said:

"Namibian workers threw their full weight behind democratic elections in Namibia. We need to do the same here".

Organised workers in South Africa support the demand for a democratically elected Constituent Assembly which will write a new constitution for a post-apartheid South Africa. Workers have demanded that the Workers Charter must become part of the new constitution.



Some of the basic worker rights demanded under the slogan "*Workers rights for a democratic constitution*" are: the right to job security, a living wage with a maximum of 40 hours work per week, paid maternity and paternity leave, decent social security benefits, and a guaranteed right to employment for all workers.

Colonial law in Namibia was bosses' law

During the time of colonial rule, Namibian workers had no laws that could give them protection from being dismissed. There was no law which forced bosses to recognise the right of trade unions to represent workers in collective bargaining. Industrial disputes were governed by an Ordinance passed by the colonialists in the 1950s.

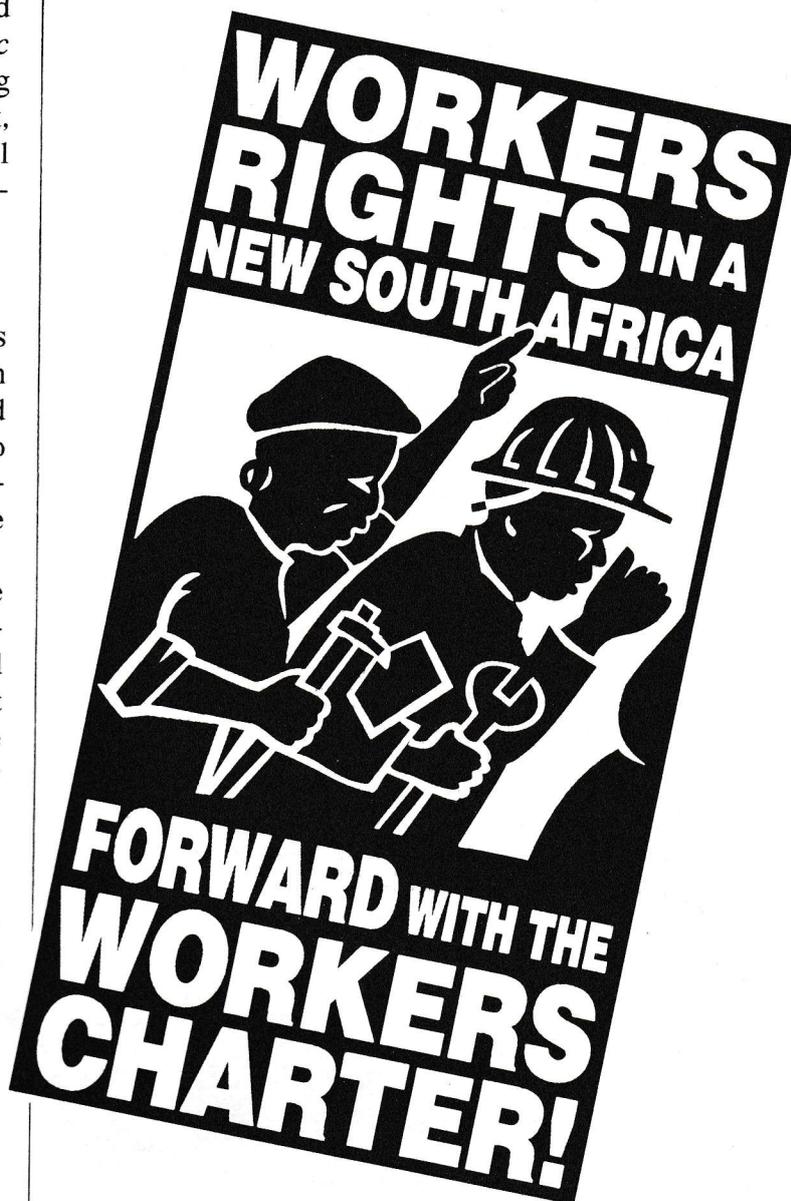
In 1976 this Ordinance was amended to include the Conditions of Employment Act. This Act contained the basic terms of contract which favoured bosses against workers. Without laws to protect them many workers were forced to work on the white owned farms, mines and factories for very low wages.

The workers' struggle is also political

In their struggle against the colonial bosses the Namibian workers built strong organisations. In 1957 OPO (Ovamboland Peoples Organisation) the forerunner to SWAPO (South West African Peoples Organisation) was formed. One of its goals then was to "Unite all Namibian people, particularly the working class ... for the purpose of safeguarding national independence and building a classless non-exploitative society."

SWAPO developed strong roots among the workers of Namibia. Under the banner of SWAPO, workers directly challenged the illegal South African regime and the imperialist bosses. Under the banner of SWAPO, 25 thousand workers rose up in the 1971 strikes against the colonial migrant labour system and its pass laws. Under the banner of SWAPO, workers demanded the immediate implementation of United Nations Resolution 435.

Organised by SWAPO cadres, workers also built the largest trade union federation the NUNW (National Union of Namibian Workers). In almost every industry of the Namibian economy the affiliates of NUNW defended workers against the attacks of the bosses. But the workers also regarded their struggle as a political struggle. Workers gave their support to SWAPO's election campaign. NUNW urged its members to "Vote for Freedom,



Vote SWAPO." At their 1989 May Day rallies, workers demanded freedom from South Africa, freedom for a living wage, freedom for strike action, jobs for all, a 40-hour working week, maternity benefits and adequate pensions.

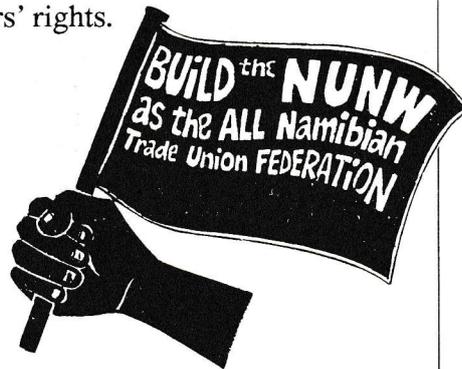
Reconciliation compromises workers' demands

When the new constitution was first published, workers found that many of the demands raised at the 1989 NUNW consultative conference and at May Day rallies had been noted. But the status of some of the demands had been changed from fundamental rights that could be enforced by law, to state policies and objectives which were not enforceable by law. NUNW objected to this and asked for the draft constitution to be opened to the public for comment.

Following an open letter to the Constituent Assembly, an NUNW delegation was summoned to meet the Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly. He diplomatically explained that the unions and workers should understand SWAPO's dilemma of not obtaining a two-third majority vote during the elections to the Constituent Assembly. This made it necessary for SWAPO to make compromises with its enemies so that a new constitution could be speedily adopted. This also led to the creation of a policy of national reconciliation, between the workers of Namibia and their old enemies in the DTA.

The NUNW did not put up any further challenge to the constitution.

Under the new constitution SWAPO was the majority party in government but its power was restricted by other parties in the National Assembly. In the National Assembly these parties negotiated the laws for an independent Namibia. Often these parties did not have the same priorities, and often the smaller but powerful DTA forced SWAPO to accept many compromises. During the past two years NUNW has consistently called on the Minister of Manpower and Labour to pass labour laws that will protect workers' rights.



The new government drags its feet

While the government delayed in passing the new labour laws, workers saw how the bosses on the farms, mines and factories took advantage of SWAPO's policy of reconciliation and retrenched hundreds of workers. Today unemployment remains the most serious problem of the Namibian economy. Unemployment has increased from 40% in the late 1980's to 50% in 1991. Many bosses also refused to give workers wage increases. For example, government and union officials reprimanded workers of Transnamib for striking, and said that they were unreasonable troublemakers out to embarrass the new government.

Workers also saw how some of their trade union leaders ate and drank wine with the bosses at

the 1991 independence and May Day celebrations. Worker leaders have also strongly criticised the government's policy of reconciliation:

If reconciliation is a ticket for the employers to re-exploit us to secure their profits while blacks are getting more unemployed, and roaming the streets, then reconciliation will no longer be accepted by the workers. (May 1991)

The new labour laws are incomplete.

In February this year the new government, with its national reconciliation policy and social contract politics, hosted a tripartite seminar in Windhoek. Representatives of the government, bosses and workers met to discuss the new labour laws before they were passed by the National Assembly. Once again the union representatives felt that their demands and representations to the labour ministry had been ignored. Their first response to the new labour laws was that the government had already decided on the laws and was simply using the seminar to inform the representatives.

The new labour laws offer a 45-hour working week, which is a one hour reduction from the 46 hours before independence. It also offers only one week severance pay after one year of employment. At present no national minimum wage laws exist. Farm workers, who, together with women workers are the most exploited in Namibia, can earn as little as R40 a month. This means the worker can be dismissed with as little as R10 as severance pay after working for one full year. Farm and domestic workers are not exempted from work on Sundays. The labour laws also give the bosses the power to decide on the period and payment of maternity leave. These are just some of the problems with the new labour laws.

In Namibia the right to strike is part of the constitution. Striking is not a criminal offence, but the new labour laws prescribe procedures that will severely restrict workers' freedom for strike action. At the tripartite seminar the representative of DTA also argued that the trade unions must take full responsibility for the wages of striking workers. If necessary, striking workers should be paid from the membership fees of the trade unions.

Although many trade union officials and workers have welcomed parts of the new labour laws, they regard these laws as incomplete because some of NUNW's demands were not granted and must still be fought for. *Aluta continua!* ★



Germany: capitalism in crisis – workers take action

For the first time in 18 years public sector workers in West Germany took militant action around their wage demand. On 27 April, 89% of the 2,8 million members of the Public Service and Transport Union started their 11 day strike. What is the significance of this action? Was the strike a success?

The public sector strikes which started in late April disrupted tram, bus, and train services in many cities. Huge backlogs in mail piled up as postal workers joined the strike and telephone exchanges were shut down. Road maintenance was disrupted and rubbish piled up in the streets. The Hamburg harbour was blocked. Many airports, including the major international airport at Frankfurt, were forced to close down as ground staff joined the strike.

For the last 18 years the leadership of the public sector unions have worked together as social partners with the state in West Germany. They have preferred to avoid strike action and to settle negotiations as quickly as possible. This has been true for all the big trade unions in West Germany. The leaders of these big unions and the bosses have worked side by side in a social contract for many years. Why did workers decide to take action now?

There have been a few times over the years when workers have shown that they will not just sit down and accept whatever the bosses hand their way. Sometimes they have taken militant action. At these times workers have made big gains, like when they won a 35-hour working week.

But mostly the union leadership, with the wealth of the unions, the bureaucratic structures, and the large number of officials behind them, have reached consensus with the bosses. They have made agreements in a way that did not build workers' control in the union, but built the control of officials. They made agreements which turned workers away from active struggle.

Because the German bosses have been making big profits, they have often been able to give workers a wage increase. Maybe it seemed to workers that they could always live comfortably

together with capitalism. But these settlements hid the truth about capitalism – that even when wages are increased the bosses are still carrying out exploitation in the interest of making profits.

But now we can see that workers in many different industries and regions are beginning to stand up and make their voice heard. In January this year steelworkers of the IG Metal union almost went on strike – a strike which threatened to bring the German economy to a standstill. The strike was stopped at the last minute when the union leadership made an agreement with the bosses.



In negotiations this year, bosses in many industries and sectors are saying they can only give increases of 3 to 4% which is below the inflation rate. But the unions are demanding increases of between 9 and 11%, and everywhere workers are standing united behind this demand. Workers in the banking sector have shown their unhappiness with the bosses' wage offer by holding one-day strikes and demonstrations.

When the public sector workers went on strike, 190 thousand engineering workers in the metal industry took action to show solidarity and to put forward their own wage demands. And workers in the building sector are also threatening to take action in support of their wage struggle.

The German economy is in crisis

The social partnership between the trade unions and the German bosses and government is collapsing as



West German steelworkers in struggle for the 35-hour week, in 1988

the bosses find it more and more difficult to make their huge profits of the past. Today German companies, like Daimler-Benz and Volkswagen, are threatening to close down factories, retrench huge numbers of workers, and move their factories to countries where labour is cheaper. They are making these threats even though they are still making big profits in Germany. But they are scared their profits will be cut if they continue to agree to the wage increases of 7% that workers in West Germany have always won in the past.

In previous years the bosses could afford to pay these wages as the economy boomed and profits soared. After the destruction of the second world war, the west German economy grew big and strong with the help of American capital. It soon dominated the other European countries, and became one of the strongest capitalist countries in the world. While they were making high profits the German bosses could afford to throw some of the crumbs of capitalism to workers.

But today the German economy is under great pressure. The growth of the economy is slowing down, and the bosses are making less profit. The crisis of capitalism internationally has arrived on Germany's doorstep. And now the cost of reunification with East Germany has hit the government. The German economy is facing many problems. Inflation is nearly 5% – the highest it has been for 10 years.

The crisis shows the truth of capitalism

When East and West Germany united, capitalists promised East Germans that their lives would improve and that capitalism was the answer to their problems. At the same time capitalists promised West Germans that their high standard of living would not suffer because of reunification.

Now workers in Germany are seeing the truth behind the lies of the capitalists. Workers in west Germany are protesting against the costs that reunification has imposed on them. The debt of the government is becoming enormous as it borrows money to cover these costs. These costs include a subsidy for the wages of workers in east Germany to try and make them equal with those of the west Germans. But it is the workers of West Germany, not the bosses, who must carry this cost. It is the money of the workers that is being eaten away, not the money of the bosses. Workers face soaring inflation, stagnant wages, cuts in social benefits and rapidly increasing taxes.

Maybe some of the workers in West Germany blame the workers in East Germany. Maybe some of them wish unification had never happened. But if they look deeper into the problems, they will see that capitalism is the real cause of them. In the past, the crumbs of the profit that the bosses gave them were at the expense of workers in other countries. And now the bosses' profit is at their expense. They will see the truth that capitalism cannot meet the needs of most of the working class. It can only benefit a few, at the expense of the majority.

The workers in east Germany are also suffering because of unification. Before the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) there was no unemployment. Now millions are unemployed – one in every three workers has no job. The wages of east German workers still lag behind those of west German workers. The monthly wages of workers in West Germany in 1991 were almost double the wages of East German workers.

The German government is privatising everything in east Germany. They are selling companies very cheaply to capitalist bosses. The bosses benefit, but the workers must bear these costs. Millions of workers have lost their jobs as the companies they worked for have been privatised. East German workers are beginning to take action to protect their jobs. At the end of last year, steelworkers occupied their factory to demand job guarantees. This year shipyard workers occupied their workplaces and held mass rallies and demonstrations as part of a campaign to protect their jobs.

The government is defeated

The bosses and the government are facing a crisis. Their economy is struggling. They are under pressure from workers in Germany. Fascists are gaining support from many Germans who think they can solve their problems by right-wing politics.

And the government has been forced to give in to the public sector workers. Before the strike, they offered the workers an increase of 4.8%. The unions were demanding 9.5%. An arbitrator suggested a wage increase of 5.4% which the government refused. But after 11 days of workers action, the government was forced to agree. For the leadership of the public sector unions the defeat of the government was a victory. But for other workers the victory is not so clear. The wage increase is still very far from their demand. And many workers feel unhappy that they were not properly consulted before the leadership made the agreement with the bosses.

The way forward for workers

Germany has just faced the biggest wave of worker action since World War II. Is this the beginning of an upsurge of worker struggle in Germany? Even if workers did not win the increase they were demanding, they forced a defeat on the government. Through their actions they showed a new militancy and willingness to struggle. Through their actions they have begun to take back control of their unions from the leadership. Through their action they have showed their leaders and the bosses that the old social partnership between the union leaders and bosses has broken down.

It is not only the public sector workers who show a new militant mood. The engineering workers in the IG Metal union are balloting to decide if they will go on strike later this month for a 6% wage increase. As the costs of unification increase, and as the international crisis of capitalism worsens, workers in east and west Germany will face more and more attacks from the bosses. Unemployment will grow, and wages will fall.

Many workers from East Germany joined the unions of west Germany when their unions collapsed after unification. But many have not joined. The conditions that workers in the east and in the west face are very different. And the bosses make separate agreements with the workers in east and west Germany to try and make sure they stay as divided as they were in the past. But one thing is clear in front of workers from east and west Germany – the bosses and the government they are struggling against are the same bosses and government.

Will workers from east and west Germany stand together to fight the bosses that are attacking the whole working class? Or will the politics of the bosses and the rightwing succeed in dividing them? Will workers in east and west Germany now manage to take back complete control of their unions from the officials? Will they build strong worker control over their struggle against the bosses?

From the struggle in Germany we can see two important things. We can see that even in the wealthy capitalist countries the bosses' system can never meet peoples' needs and will always push them into struggle. We can also see that even after many years of high benefits and trade union bureaucracy, workers will still find a way to take action and bring their struggle under their own control. ★



The Zimbabwe railway strike

At the beginning of this year railway workers in Zimbabwe went on strike. Royal Gwebu, from Zimbabwe, sent WORKERS' WORLD this report on the strike.

On 15 January 1992 railway workers in grades seven to twelve downed their tools in protest against what they called discrimination by management after management awarded artisans and senior enginemen a 7% special skills allowance. This was caused by the agreement between the NRZ management, the labour chief and the RAE which made both the agreements without the mother union RAWU. Workers declared it illegal.

The strike spread throughout the country with all workers demanding 13% salary increase. Workers vowed not to return to work until their demands were met. They also called for the increase to be backdated to July 1990.

The management tried to open doors for workshops to operate but artisans switched off the power supply. All department heads and supervisors were ordered to write names of artisans who did not report for duty and submit them to management. Train services came to a stand-still, as more than 4 thousand skilled and semi-skilled workers continued with industrial action.

The general manager of NRZ, Mr Mabhena, declared the strike illegal and then announced the firing of all striking workers with immediate effect. Workers, who included clerks, builders, and plumbers, were also fired after striking against the parastatal's decision to award a 7% special skills allowance to artisans who had earlier gone on strike. The NRZ said the action by workers resulted in the parastatal losing \$50 million in revenue. The strike was started by about 2 thousand workers but it ended with 16 thousand workers countrywide.

Demonstrations by wives and workers and their children were held throughout the city with some placards reading.

"\$50 million gone, Mabhena fire yourself"

"NRZ for sale – by Mabhena"

"unskilled plus killed is equal to NRZ"

"Step down Mabhena"

"Peace, Democracy, Action"

The women marched from Sizinda township to city centre where they proceeded to the city hall before gathering at the NRZ building in Fife Street. Some sources within the building told women that the general manager Mr Mabhena had ran away.

Solidarity came from the ICFTU General Secretary who called on the President to intervene to have the NRZ workers not to be fired. The Transport and General Union protested strongly from international trade unions that they stop all Zimbabwe goods coming in until the grievance had been settled.

With that action almost everything was brought to a standstill in the country. The Labour Minister advised the parastatal to re-employ all workers on new conditions. When the ZARU went to court it won all cases. At first the NRZ refused, defying the court order to have workers reinstated. Workers in Zimbabwe and the unemployed flocked the NRZ employment offices seeking employment. The line on Monday was stretching about 1/2 kilometer.

But later the bosses were forced to take back the workers. This showed that despite the suspension of ZARU by the labour chief, it won all sides through their dedication, their commitment to support their union. The president of the union, Mr Mabheka is a true fearless leader who showed his strength and leadership to the union and other unions as well in ZCTU federation.

The ZCTU did not actively show its action of solidarity to the aggrieved workers, as its director, the labour chief, was doing all means to crush the ZARU. What makes Zimbabwe workers not to solidarise with their fellow workers is because of political beliefs which combines tribalism, regionalism and of course poor organising by unions – where unions are made answerable to the labour chief and government.

We thank all international workers movements for making all the workers within the parastatal to be reinstated without loss of anything. ★



The struggle for May Day in South Korea

In March this year ILRIG received the following letter from the Korean Trade Union Congress. The KTUC asked us to forward it to COSATU and NACTU in their effort to build closer relations with South African workers. In the letter you will see the concrete suggestions that the KTUC makes about how unions in South Africa can build solidarity with Korean workers.

Dear Comrades,

I would like to pay my respects to you for your international solidarity activities in securing workers' rights and improving living conditions.

May Day is coming soon. KTUC has in mind May Day's spirit and would like to celebrate it with all workers of the world. We are delivering the solidarity message of Korean workers to your organisation.

May Day has a special meaning for us Korean workers. Here I'd like to explain the history and meaning of May Day in Korea.



Now it seems that Korean workers by themselves have revived May Day. In 1991 considerable number of workers celebrated May Day by themselves in spite of the government's stubborn hindrance. The government adhered to another anniversary, which had been legislated as a public holiday called "Employees Day" in 1963.

Originally Korean workers already celebrated May Day sporadically all over the country since the early 1920s, and this had continued under the harsh

oppression of Japanese colonial rule. After Korea was liberated from Japanese rule by the end of World War Two in 1945, even though the union movement was split into two groups, the one descended from the national liberation struggle and the new one established by the new government, May Day was celebrated by both groups.

But after the traditional union was dissolved by the government, the only remaining union, FKTU, discarded May Day in 1958. At that time the FKTU declared, "I am willing to replace May Day with the other memorial day in honour of the instruction of President Lee Seung-man." The President ordered FKTU to change workers' day to the other day which was the date on which FKTU was founded. When FKTU was founded, the chairperson of FKTU was no other than Lee Seung-man himself, who was far from workers. Afterwards, in 1963 the government legislated 10 March as the public holiday called "Employees Day".

As the Korean union movement has restored its independence since 1987, the campaign to rehabilitate May Day and to wind off the "Employees Day", which is a symbol of workers' subordination to the rulers, has sprung up.

Many trade unions have come to provide May Day as a holiday with pay in collective agreement since 1989, and are now celebrating it despite the government's ban. FKTU had to support the revival of May Day in 1989, but are not so steady as KTUC and other independent federations. Executives of FKTU have continued to be given awards on 10 March from the government for their contribution towards cooperation even after 1989, and workers criticise the way the FKTU faces in two directions at the same time.

When the government prohibits May Day and part of FKTU's leadership opposes the restoration of May Day, they say May Day is the date which communists celebrate. This was the reason they gave when May Day was discarded in 1958, and it is one of the numerous methods they are adopting to repress Korean workers. From this, you can see the extent to what Korean workers are repressed by the government and the employers.

KTUC and independent federations instructed their affiliates to take off May 1 and to celebrate the world-wide observed workers' day. Our struggle against the government's ban on May Day and to revive this symbol of workers' struggle and independence must be successful and May Day shall be held again in Korea. There are however, people who still look on May Day as the communists' day, like the government says. Korean workers are striving to revive May Day under severe repression. Your assistance and support will be a great help for us, Korean workers.

KTUC and independent federations have a plan to hold jointly a rally celebrating May Day on 2nd of May under the sponsorship of the "Joint Committee for ILO Matters and Revisions of Labour Laws."

If you provide us the information about your practice and position about May Day, and if you make known widely the situation Korean workers are confronted by, it will be very helpful for us. Also I hope you will protest against the Korean government's condemnation of May Day.

Korean workers are eagerly looking forward to your solidarity message for May Day in Korea. Would you please let us know of your solidarity action by 10 April? Your warm concerns on Korean trade unions will be highly appreciated.

With best regards,
Dan, Byung-ho
President, KTUC

If you want to speak to Korean workers through the KTUC then you can use the following address:

President Dan, Byung-Ho
Korean Trade Union Congress
5/F Dongwon Building
56-38, Sungin-Dong
Jongru-Ku
Seoul 110-550
Korea

American workers support NUMSA struggle

Early this year Bethuel Maserumele, Regional Secretary for NUMSA in the Wits East Region, visited the United States to seek support for the NUMSA dispute with the multinational company, Crown Cork and Seal. This is an edited version of his report on the solidarity work that was organised in the USA. The report was written on March 26 1992.

Crown Cork and Seal dismissed 196 NUMSA members after a two-day stayaway in September 1991. The company has now replaced us permanently. Crown has about 60 plants in the USA. Two American unions are strongly organised at Crown - the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA).

After my arrival in New York on February 24th 1992, we had a meeting with Crown. Given its refusal to talk about jobs, we decided to embark on a programme for mobilisation to put pressure on the company. Actions in the USA were to happen on the same day of our regional actions in South Africa on March 30th 1992.

The unions USWA and IAM agreed to support a campaign against Crown. Now, support from other organisations and activists was possible. The unions agreed to inform their members of our dispute through a pamphlet, call on shopstewards to engage their management on the dismissals, and call on members to take mass action on March 30.

Labour Solidarity groups, which carry out solidarity work for South African trade unions, agreed to conduct pickets and demonstrations at the offices of Crown and to put pressure on major shareholders in the company.

We also got the support of some members of the Congress (Parliament) and progressive institutions that are shareholders of Crown. The big American trade union federation, AFL-CIO, agreed to hold a press conference to express their support for the campaign.

On March 19 NUMSA, USWA and IAM called the Crown management to a meeting. Workers were represented internationally in the fight to reinstate the dismissed NUMSA workers.



T&GWU trip to Britain

A few weeks ago, three officials from the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) returned from a trip to Britain. ILRIG interviewed Harald Harvey to find out more about worker struggle and worker organisations in Britain today. With this information, we can look at how to build a strong relationship of solidarity with British workers. Comrade Harald is Branch Secretary of T&GWU Cape Town branch. The opinions expressed in this interview are his own.

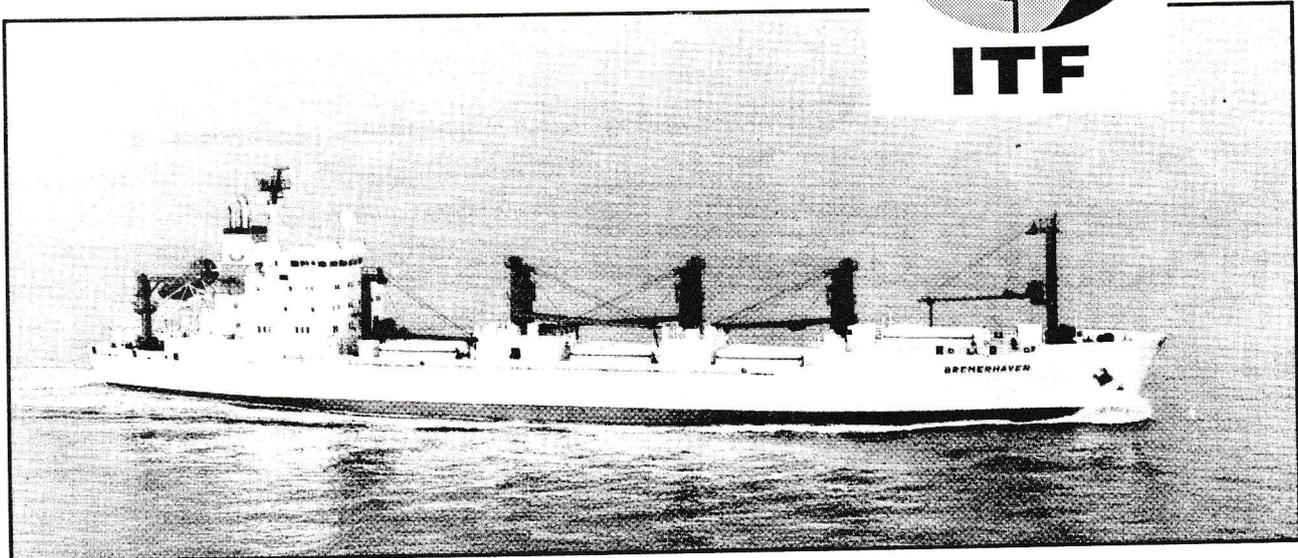
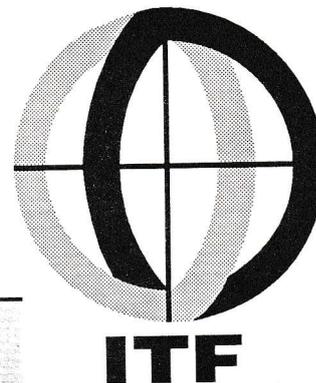
★ *What was the purpose of your visit to Britain?*

The main purpose was for myself and two other T&GWU officials to get trained as shipping inspectors. This training forms part of the International Transport Workers Federation's (ITF) campaign against flags of convenience. T&GWU is an affiliate of the ITF and has joined forces with other unions which organise shipping workers internationally to campaign against shipping bosses. Many of these bosses register ships in countries where repressive labour laws make it possible to exploit workers on a massive scale. The ships then sail flying the flags of these countries – flags which are convenient for the bosses.

So our job as inspectors will be to go on board ships with flags of convenience which dock in South African harbours and check wages and working

conditions. We will also assist workers with their problems and help them struggle for their ship to be covered by a standard international agreement called the ITF Collective Agreement.

But the real success of this work depends on solidarity coming from South African dockworkers. If workers here do not load or unload flags of convenience ships, then the ship cannot leave port and the bosses will be forced to sign agreements.





★ *Did you make any direct contact with British unions?*

We had informal contact with two unions. We spent a day working with the London shipping inspector from the Railway and Maritime Transport Union. This comrade had been a worker leader in the P&O strike two years ago. P&O is Britain's biggest shipping company (see article on P&O strike in *Workers World* No 1). We also had contact with Region 1 of the British T&GWU.



★ *Through your contact with these unions, what would you say are the major issues facing British workers?*

Listening to the comrade speak about his experience of the P&O strike, we realised the full extent of the Conservative Party's attacks against the working class. Like in South Africa, the bosses and government in Britain have made laws which attack workers and their unions. During the P&O strike, the bosses and government used the law to seize all the union's funds and to close their offices.

The law has also made all solidarity action illegal. In the past, British dockworkers were always ready to show solidarity by refusing to unload ships where the bosses were not paying decent wages. Today if British dockworkers took this action, they would be dismissed and their union funds would be seized by the courts.

From the T&GWU visit, we saw three things which were very close to our hearts:

Firstly, since the defeat of the 1989 dock strike, the bosses and government in Britain have smashed job security in the harbours. Today all British dockworkers are casuals. In South Africa we also face growing casualisation in the docks as bosses attack job security in favour of making super profits.

Secondly, there have been massive attacks against British workers in the bus industry. In South Africa, the government has removed all subsidies from public transport. And the bosses and government have introduced a tendering system whereby bus companies have to compete for contracts. For workers this has meant retrenchments and higher bus prices. Workers in Britain are being attacked in exactly the same way.

Thirdly, T&GWU told us that in the face of all the attacks, years of union bureaucratisation had weakened their ability to fight back. The power of the unions on the shopfloor was not built in a way that could arm workers to defend themselves. It is only now that they are beginning to take strong shopfloor organisation, worker control and democracy seriously again. It is difficult to see if this process is happening in the other unions. But a hard struggle lies ahead because British unions have a long history of undemocratic, bureaucratic leadership.

There is also a very inspiring message coming from British workers. Throughout the thirteen years of Conservative Party rule, they have continued to build militant struggles like the 1984 Miners' Strike and the Seamen's Strike. These struggles have

shown us that the British working class is not defeated.

★ *How then do we understand the victory of the Conservative Party again in the recent general elections?*

We were there at the height of the election campaign. In many ways we were surprised that the Conservative Party won. In the face of privatisation, homelessness and rising unemployment, why did many British workers vote for the Conservative Party?

I can think of some reasons:

First, the British Labour Party is meant to be a mass working class party but spent most of its time speaking to the bosses and explaining why the party should not be seen as a threat. The leadership also asked the unions not to publically endorse the Labour Party. They were worried that strong worker support would alienate the "middle-ground"! So the Labour Party never spoke to the real problems faced by the working class. They never committed themselves to reversing privatisation or significantly changing the labour laws. So the question is who does the Labour Party belong to and how should it move forward?

Secondly, the Conservative Party spent all its time speaking about what would happen if the Labour Party won. They were able to use the reformism of the Labour Party against it. For example, the Labour Party promised the bosses that it would not impose higher taxes. But at the same time, it promised workers better social services. So where did the Labour Party think the money would come from for these services? The Conservative Party was able to expose these contradictions.

Thirdly, the role of the mass media also helped the Conservative Party's campaign. Although all the main political parties were given equal time to present their views on television and the radio, the media focussed on the concerns of the bosses and middle class. All this shows that equal time and space in the media is not enough for free and fair elections. The working class needs resources to take its issues and programme to people without it being manipulated by the political and economic control of the bosses over the mass media.

★ *What relationship are you hoping to build with British T&GWU in the future?*

We already have in place a programme of cooperation around worker education and training. But I

think the biggest possibilities lie in the two unions sharing their common experiences around issues of casualisation, privatisation and labour law. In this way we can begin to look at building a strong international campaign in our industry which mobilises both British and South African workers.

★ *Why is it important to build solidarity between British and South African workers?*

It is very clear how the government and bosses in Britain work closely with the government and bosses in South Africa. Multinationals like Anglo, British Petroleum (BP), DHL, BTR Sarmcol and Unitrans exploit workers in both countries. And in both countries, workers have experienced repressive labour laws. So workers need to unite in a common struggle against the bosses.

A big challenge in South Africa is to move away from seeing international solidarity as only building support for our struggle. We also need to look at how we can give support to other workers in struggle. It is workers in other countries who have been the most consistent in supporting our own struggle. ★





WORKERS'



We welcome letters from comrades. You can write about something that you read in WORKERS' WORLD or about your own ideas and experiences in the struggle. Sometimes we have to make your letter a bit shorter so that it will fit into the space we have.

"Our magazine"

Dear ILRIG

Greetings in the year of mass action for the transfer of power and the Peoples' Parliament. I would like to congratulate you and your magazine. Your magazine is interesting and it contains more information than I thought it would. So from today I am no longer going to say "your magazine" but our magazine.

Our magazine taught me many things and I think there is no need to mention them, you know them. I tried to popularise it with the copies of WORKERS' WORLD that you sent me and many comrades are interested in it. So please could you send me 50 copies of WORKERS' WORLD No. 7.

*Long Live Workers' World! Long Live ILRIG!
Abash Imperialism Abash!*

From Alfred Motsi,
(ANC Youth League, Western Transvaal)

Workers' one voice

This is one of ten poems sent to ILRIG by Frederick Mohlatlole.

Viva COSATU!"
So says the oppressed workers of this country
People who are suffering
People who are exploited
People who are humiliated
Yes, people who are face to face with apartheid
People who are confronted with racism
Away with the oppressors
Away with the capitalists
Who exploit our brothers and sisters
Mothers and fathers

The totalitarian regime
Seek hiding place in time
You have enjoyed our country and is enough
Freedom or death, Victory is certain
Liberation is on the way
One Azania, one trade union
Call NACTU
Call NUM
Call COSATU
Them be one Union
To fight for the demands of the oppressed workers
Viva NACTU!
Viva NUM!
Viva COSATU!



ILRIG has an exchange relationship with many publications around the world. The following publications were used as sources for articles in this edition of WORKERS' WORLD.

PHILIPPINES

- KMU Correspondence
- International Viewpoint
- International Labour Reports
- Solidaridad

UNITED STATES

- Labor Notes
- Class Struggle
- International Viewpoint
- Guardian Weekly

- Workers Vanguard
- Injury to All

ZIMBABWE

- Social Change
- Read On
- Southern Africa
- Southern Africa Report

GERMANY

- Class Struggle

- International Viewpoint
- Newsweek
- Living Marxism
- Socialist Review
- Flashes

NAMIBIA

- Namibian Worker
- Facts and Reports
- The Namibian

Solidarity calendar

Dear ILRIG,

Thank you very much for the attractive calendar brought out by you for the year 1992.

We are happy to note that the message given by the calendar is most appropriate in today's situation. When socialism is under attack by the reactionary forces all over the world your calendar asserts the need for the struggle for socialism. Its message for the international solidarity of the working class is most encouraging.

We earnestly hope you would continue with your efforts to build proletarian solidarity and establishing the leading role of the working class in social transformation.

We wish all success to you in your activities during 1992.

With warm greetings,

Yours fraternally,

MK Pandhe

(General Secretary,

Centre of Indian Trade Unions, New Delhi, India)

The ILRIG calendar for 1992 is more than just a calendar.

It contains writing and pictures about international worker solidarity that can be used for discussion and education programmes. Each page has a different theme:

- ★ Bosses' internationalism and workers' internationalism
- ★ International solidarity of women workers
- ★ Solidarity through international trade unions

- ★ International defence of worker struggle in Spain
- ★ South-South worker solidarity: South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, Philippines.
- ★ Worker solidarity in Southern Africa

You can still buy this colourful educational calendar for only R5.

Send a postal order to ILRIG, PO Box 213, Salt River, 7925 . . . before they run out!



**BUILD SOLIDARITY
WITH OUR ALLIES IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA**



Workshop material: Capitalist development and working class struggle in the 20th Century

Recently ILRIG was asked to design course material on international capitalist development and working class struggle in the 20th century for the COSATU Winter School.

We have put together a workshop pack with this material that can be used by other organisations.

SECTION ONE of the workshop contains two inputs and discussions as an introduction:

- The Marxist theory of class struggle as a way of understanding history.
- How we can use knowledge from history and from worker struggle in other countries as a weapon in our own struggle.

SECTION TWO of the workshop contains five themes for small group reading and discussion:

- Strengths and weaknesses in worker struggle and organisation: European worker struggle in the early 20th century.
- Strategies for socialism and national liberation in the 20th century.
- Capitalist prosperity and reformism in worker organisation: 1945 – 1960's.
- Capitalist crisis and attacks on the working class: 1970's – 1990's.
- Bosses internationalism and worker internationalism.

SECTION THREE of the workshop contains eight country case studies of worker struggle and organisation:

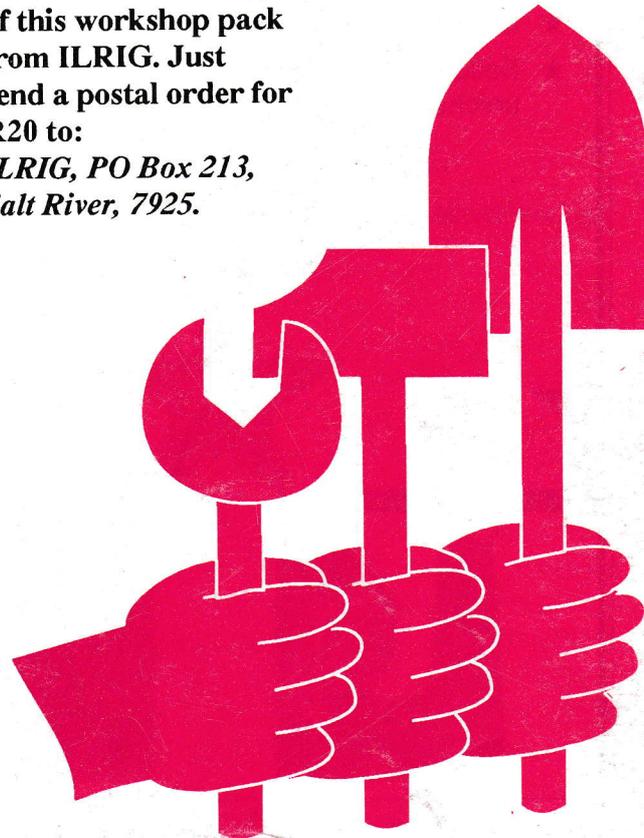
- Worker struggle in South Africa in the 1940's and 1950's.
- Worker struggle and political independence in Namibia.
- The Russian revolution and the rise of Stalinism.
- Worker struggle against Fascism in Spain in the 1930's.
- Bureaucratic socialism and the Solidarity movement in Poland.
- Militant trade unionism in South Korea.
- Militant trade unionism in the Philippines.
- The British mineworkers strike of 1984.

Each of these country case studies contains short simple readings and questions for discussion. These case studies raise important questions and lessons

for our struggle today in South Africa. Some of these issues are:

- the relationship between trade unions and political parties
- the need to build the political independence of the working class
- class alliances in the struggle for democracy
- the importance of international worker solidarity
- worker self-defence against the right wing
- the social contract between unions, bosses and the bosses' state
- the relationship between trade unions and a workers' state
- the role of women workers in the struggle
- worker-student alliances
- the importance of working class unity

**You can order a copy
of this workshop pack
from ILRIG. Just
send a postal order for
R20 to:
ILRIG, PO Box 213,
Salt River, 7925.**



Workers, youth, students and activists....
Send your letters, stories and poems to
WORKERS' WORLD, so we can publish them.
Write to: **ILRIG, PO Box 213, Salt River, 7925**